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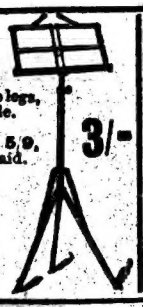

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By Walter B. Grogan.

VI.—TAKING A BRIDE.

"We were sitting on the banks of the Danube waiting for the waters to go down," said my friend, Dick Harrington. "There were not many of us at this game of making pretty stories for newspapers out of the quarrels of nations in the days of the Russo-Turkish war. Now when there's a breeze, and the armies begin to stand and the transports coal quickly, we gather like locusts and swarm on the heels of the troops. Then we were few, and most of us were young and clumsy at the game, and came with a big five-storeyed belief in ourselves and an ignorance deeper and blacker than the ignorance of a Parliamentary Commission.

"The first splinter of the war was over, and the serious work was before us. The Russians lay on the north bank of the Danube, and looked at the swollen, angry river running at their feet, and the Turks squatted on the other side with a veneration for the late spring which kept the Danube busy tumbling and seething by on its way to the sea. I was with the Russian army, and shared with them their vexation at the delay. The river was never so late in falling, and June found us still on the bank with the impracticable river hissing defiance at us.

"In this enforced idleness I made friends with a young lieutenant of Cossacks. At this time I forget his patronymic. A Russian patronymic is one that a sensible man forgets as soon as possible for the sake of his brain. His first name was Ivan, *lot* which I was thankful as presenting no great difficulty to my tongue. He was a bold, dashing, handsome enough fellow, with a vast belief in his own powers and a touch or more of that daring bravery which is all dash and which is very characteristic of the Cossack. Above all he spoke French with the fluency of a Russian, and had a plentiful supply of cigars. In a day we were friends, in three days we were inseparable. We were both young, we were both cultured in our taste for cigars, we were both idle—what would you?

"We had run through half of June staring at the swollen Danube subsiding in a very slow way when Ivan came to my hut. For the last few days there had been considerable stir among the troops, and the regiments were massed all down the north bank. With our glasses we could watch the uneasiness of the Turkish troops. They were for the most part lying between Rustchuk and Nicopolis, at which point they expected us to cross, but the whole of the south bank was unoccupied.

"Ivan, however, had dropped a hint, and I had acted upon it, so that I lay at Galatz. Most of the other correspondents were facing the bulk of the Turkish army, and openly laughed at me for preferring Galatz. Afterwards I did the laughing, and it was good. Ivan had left his regiment and was serving with the staff. He had considerable knowledge of the neighbourhood, and this knowledge was useful to Inkoff and Zimmermann.

"'Harrington,' said Ivan, squatting on the bare ground and spitting out the bitten end of a cigar, 'we have been friends for some while. You have found good in me and I have found good in you.'

"'My dear fellow,' I answered, 'your cigars are excellent.'

"'To you I must often have seemed preoccupied. That is so, is it not?'

"'You are a bit uncanny. When a fellow speaks to another as wisely as I do to you, and he answers with nothing but a fourteen-mile limit look in his eyes as you often do, Ivan, it does look a bit as though you were preoccupied.'

"'You know that I am acquainted with this neighbourhood, and it has not occurred to you to ask me how it became familiar ground.'

"'It had occurred to me, but I have not asked.'

"Ivan looked up at me and smiled.

"'You English are phlegmatic to the extreme. You make excellent friends, and for that very reason very poor acquaintances. You have not asked, but I will tell you if you care to know.'

"'Fire away,' I said. 'If it's interesting I shall listen, if not—well, it's growing dark, and you will not see.'

"'Two years ago in my own place on the banks of the Don I met a Bulgarian maid.'

"'*Cherchez la femme*,' I said sententiously.

"'Man is very much alike the world over. A Cossack may love as well as—as well as you.'

"'Better,' I said promptly. 'I carry my loves with me—a decent straight eye revolver and a dozen or so notebooks.'

"'The name of the Bulgarian maid was Silitska. She was the only daughter of a wealthy landowner named Achmet Vektash. We fell in love, we were betrothed, and I went on a long visit to her home. That home is nine miles below Matchin, about a mile or so from Galatz.'

"'Your knowledge is explained.'

"'The father, although a Bulgarian, espoused the cause of Turkey. We quarrelled. I told him—what does it matter? We quarrelled violently. A Cossack is not cautious in his moments of anger. I returned to my home nursing my anger. With it is a memory of a weeping Silitska. The dog beat her, cursed her, and I—I was powerless. I, Ivan, was powerless, for they bound my arms. Now it is my turn. Do you see?'

"'You are a little indefinite, Ivan. It is a pity to grow violent for to provoke appetite, and I cannot compliment you on your arrangements for the forwarding of supplies.'

"'My friend, you have never been in love?'

"'Never!' I answered promptly. 'I may be a fool, but there is a limit.'

"'You have never hated anyone.'

"'Only one fellow—he was a club waiter, and mixed me a salad.'

"'Pshaw! What do you know of life? Life is love and hate. We Cossacks are a mixed race, and they say that mixed races are ever passionate. Yes, I know what you would say. We are cold, impassive, impenetrable, mysterious. You have seen a sleeping volcano under a cap of snow? *Voilà!* I love Silitska. I hate Achmet. He is a dog—he is a traitor. He works with the unclean Turk and would sell his country!'

"'This is all very interesting, Ivan, but what does it matter to me? You have not told me this story for nothing? You want to run me into the show, eh?'

"'You are my friend?'

"'My dear Ivan, I would cut my last cigar in two and give you the better half!'

"'Yes, I know. You English are like your country—you throw about yourself a fog of coldness to hide the beauty of your nature. I told you that Silitska lives nine miles below Matchin.'

"'Well?'

"'The night is dark.'

"'You mean, Ivan——' I said, starting to my feet.

"'That the Danube has been falling for some time, that I know the way, that I have a boat, that I have leave, that I want nothing but—a friend!'

"'He is here, Ivan,' I said quietly.

"'Harrington, there is danger.'

"'Of course—it would not be worth the worry otherwise.'

"'Then to-night?'

"'So be it—to-night.'

"He came very close to me and caught my right hand in his. He was very strong in his fingers, and his emotion got rather the better of him.

"'If there is to be any shooting to-night it will be as well not to dislocate any of the bones of my hand, Ivan,' I ventured to remonstrate.

"He strode through the doorway of the rough hut, and I went swiftly to work, buckling on my belt with the revolvers, slipping a flask into my breast pocket, and buttoning on my long cloak. When I joined Ivan the dusk was growing and the lights of the outposts down the river began to glow in the twilight.

"There were about half-a-dozen mounted Cossacks with Ivan and two led ponies. Ivan and I were in the saddle quickly, and then we went madly down the river, the half-wild little horses scurrying like frolicsome rats.

"'I wonder you got leave, Ivan,' I said.

"'The army wants to cross. I have volunteered to pass the night on the other bank and look for a course. The General knows nothing of Silitska.'

"'Then what the dickens will you do with her when she comes across? The General must not know.'

"'You have guessed that she is to come across?'

"'Yes! I hardly expected you would risk our lives for the pleasure of asking her if she is feeling pretty well.'

"'I wanted a friend to take charge of her. You are the friend.'

"'I? Take charge of a woman? No, impossible! I don't mind letting off a revolver by mistake—wonderful what accidents happen with a hair trigger—but I won't have anything to do with a woman! It's too dangerous. Besides, there is the DAILY TELEGRAM. If you are going to crawl over the sewer I must be there. My readers will demand it.'

"'Peace, my friend, there will be time for both.'

"After a nearly two-miles' mad rush we reined in and slipped from our horses, the Cossacks remaining in their saddles motionless.

"'Are you going to cart these fellows over?' I asked.

"'No,' Ivan answered. 'Only Paul and his son go with us. Paul is an old servant of my family who has been with me ever since I have served the Little Father. The others will wait for us.'

"On the shelving bank was a stout boat, heavily built, with rude, rough oars.

"The boat was heavy and big—too big for us, but the turbulent flow of waters, the rough, mad rush, the swift currents, all united in demanding a boat of substantial build. For a time we made poor headway across the current. Then Ivan and I took an oar each, and we began to move more rapidly in our direction. The twilight gave way to night, and the world was black. Over the troubled surface of the river the wind played fantastic tunes in a minor key. We rowed in silence. Ivan pausing now and then in an effort to pierce the darkness. My arms ached with half-an-hour's toil at the lumbering sweeps. I settled down to the long discomfort of a heavy task. After some time the bottom of the boat grated, swung free, and grated again. As far as I could see, the water ran in with here and there tangled driftwood.

"'We must wade,' Ivan said shortly.

"He stood up and slipped his cloak above his waist. I did the same. Then we slipped over the side into the black water, which chilled me to our knees. The two Cossacks remained in the boat.

"'The bank is all marsh, reeds, and rushes. Don't stumble, Harrington, there is not far to go.'

"'Mademoiselle Silitska must be very charming,' I murmured.

"'She is,' he answered.

"When we reached the dry earth my legs were all clogged with mud and ached with the cold. My temper was not pleasant. Ivan on the other hand seemed fairly cheerful.

"'It is quite practicable,' he said.

"'What is practicable?'

"'My friend the General would not give me leave to fetch Silitska.'

"'The General is a man of sound common sense, and I have a sincere admiration for him.'

"'Hence I have come ostensibly to form some opinion of the bank for landing purposes. There is hardly an inch of the bank I do not know. It was not necessary to come here to find that out. It was necessary to come to fetch Silitska. The only point that was doubtful was the strength of the current and the present state of the bank. That I know now.'

"'You ought to,' I said savagely. 'I am carrying more than a fair sample upon my legs.'

"'And it is feasible. Now for Silitska!'

"We stumbled on it seemed to me for a few weeks, with the night as black as ink and the ground as bad as the Strand during repairing time. I began to think I was a fool. I have since confirmed my opinion. I was not in love with Silitska, and I wasn't going to marry her. In brief, it was absolutely no business of mine, and I was an incomparable ass to go.

"In the distance were the watch fires of the Turks. Once we nearly walked into a sentry on outpost duty. Luckily Ivan had studied their positions with glasses for some time and steered very successfully. In silence we came to a big house sitting broadly on the land. I could tell it was a house because of the deeper shade of black. We worked cautiously round to the back. A dog barked savagely and flew at us. Ivan caught him by the throat and stabbed swiftly with a sheath knife, and there was silence.

"A creeper covered the house, which was two storeyed. In one room on the upper storey there was a light. Inside we could hear someone moving about.

"'Silitska!' Ivan murmured.

"'Why is she not in bed?' I asked.

"'I sent a letter by Paul through her maid. She is in waiting.'

"He gave the cry of a night fowl. In answer the window opened silently and the lamp was lowered.

"Ivan threw off his cloak and gave it to me with a dagger.

"'It,' he said, referring to the latter, 'is less noisy than a revolver.'

"'All right,' I answered, 'but I shall not use it unless there is urgent need. And the barkers shall not speak until the last minute.'

"He swung himself up by the creeper and disappeared into the room.

"It's easy enough telling a story like this within call of a copper and hail of a hansom, but the doing plays on your nerves until you quiver all over. I am not more of a coward than the average man, and I have got used to the song of bullets, but the time I spent under that window waiting gave me a lasting sympathy with recruits who stand still and wait as their first hand in the game of war. Bless you, Beverley, it's easier to walk up to a Gatling in full flower than to do nothing steadily!

"Suddenly I heard the noise of a door unbarred, and a voice called into the night. I looked upwards. The lamp was turned out swiftly.

"The voice called to the dog, but the dog made no answer. Ivan had made quite sure of that. Then the door opened widely, pouring out a broad track of light, and a figure came out with a lantern. The figure was armed. It had a revolver clenched in the right hand and a sword girt round the waist. For the rest I made him out to be a wiry, active man somewhere near sixty.

"The man came until he was close to me, yet he never turned the lantern in my direction. He seemed to be looking for the dog. He passed, calling the dog, just by my side. I gathered up Ivan's cloak in my two hands and threw it over the fellow's head and shoulders, pulling it tightly behind. He struggled frantically and tried to shout. I tripped him up and knelt on him, tightening the cloak until he was nearly smothered.

"A slight noise came from above, and I looked up. Ivan was lowering a young girl out of the window by a rope.

"'Here,' said I, 'is papa-in-law, I believe.'

"Silitska stood apart, wringing her hands and moaning, which gave me a poor opinion of her intelligence. Ivan quickly shaped a handkerchief into a handy gag. Leaning down he hissed at the place in the cloak where he deemed the man's head might be.

"'We are going to gag you. If you utter a sound I shall put my knife into your heart. I have a knife,' he pricked him, and a smothered growl came from the cloak, 'and I would rather kill you than be shot by the accursed Turks. You understand?'

"The man understood—few men would have failed to understand under the circumstances. We released him from the cloak and gagged him with the handkerchief. I then bound him securely hand and foot with the rope Silitska had loosened from her waist.

"We moved swiftly, and had gone quite half the way to the boat when we heard cries in the direction of the house. Silitska wept. The doubts I had had concerning the wisdom of my action came back to me. To add to our uneasiness we could distinctly hear hurried orders given to the Turkish outposts.

"Between us we half dragged Silitska over the remaining portion of dry ground. When we came to the marsh and the mud the Turkish outposts were unpleasantly near. I looked at Ivan. He was a spare, wiry little fellow, but evidently of no great strength. Silitska, sobbing, looked unpleasantly big. She swore she could not and would not wade through the water. I gave my cloak to Ivan and took her up in my arms.

"He looked regretfully at us when she put her arms round my neck, but she was very large and he acquiesced.

"I stumbled on, nearly falling at every step, until my knees felt like damp blotting paper, and my muscles were strained so far that I expected them to snap every moment. Then Ivan repeated his call, and it was answered a little beyond us. In a few minutes more I tumbled Silitska into the boat and fell in after her myself.

"It was in the half grey of lateness morning when we got to the other side and found the Cossacks. They placed Silitska on one pony and I mounted another. In the afternoon I had lunch with some of Ivan's friends in the little village of Vamita, who very kindly spared me some soap. I left my charge with them and rode back to Galatz.

"All the world knows how on the morrow the Russians commenced the crossing of the Danube, and its complete success was mainly due to the local knowledge of Ivan."

(THE END OF THE SERIES.)

The Christmas Double Number of the ATHLETIC RECORD will be on sale on Wednesday next, December 14th. Price 2d.——

WHEN TOMMY ATKINS GETS THE CAT.

THAT THIS DOESN'T OFTEN HAPPEN IS GREATLY TO THE CREDIT OF THE ARMY.

SHOULD Tommy Atkins be flogged? That is a question which has been exercising the minds of a good many people of late.

Indeed, it has actually been the cause of the recent issue of a Parliamentary paper, which the curious may purchase for the sum of a halfpenny. It is not a voluminous report by any means, for it only covers one side of a sheet of paper about foolscap size. It gives the number of men who have been flogged from the end of 1891 to the end of 1896, in the home prisons.

It is curious in that it shows a sudden rapid rise from one in 1891, and two in 1892 to thirteen in 1893, and sixteen in 1894. Then came a drop in 1895 to ten, and a further drop in 1896 to five. There thus seems to have been a rising and subsiding wave of insubordination, for it is to this cause as well as that of striking a warder that corporal punishment is invariably due.

It is certainly to the credit of the Army that out of all regiments quartered throughout England and Scotland, Ireland and Wales, there should have been even at the worst only sixteen cases of corporal punishment in the twelve months, although the number of prisoners during that same period numbered 1,948.

There is a sort of rough agreement between the number of prisoners punished and those receiving corporal punishment, for in 1891 there were 1,120 prisoners so punished. In 1892 the number had risen to 1,581; in 1893 it had further increased to 1,642; while in 1894, when the highest number of floggings was recorded, the total number of prisoners punished also reached its climax, 1,948. In the following year the punishments dropped to 1,024, while in 1896 only 808 men were punished.

The authorities are by no means of the opinion that corporal punishment is likely to be done away with—just yet, at all events. They consider that the fear of the lash exercises a most wholesome influence over the men—a greater influence, indeed, than actually flogging them would produce. This is the expressed idea of one of the chief officials at the Home Office, who frequently has to try prisoners himself.

His experience has been that, whenever he has had a sufficiently bad case to warrant his thinking of the cat, the prisoner has always begged that it should not be administered to him. For this reason this gentleman practically never orders those whom he convicts to be flogged, for the reality would not, he believes, come up to what the men fear. It is a case in his mind of familiarity breeding contempt.

Soldiers who are ordered corporal punishment may not get more than twenty-five lashes. In this they have a distinct advantage over the civilian, for the maximum number for a non-military malefactor is thirty-six. If, however, a soldier is tried and convicted in a civil court he may be condemned to receive that number of lashes.

Military prisons, it should be remembered, are only intended for men who will, on the expiration of their term of sentence, be allowed to return to their regiment. The man who has committed a crime which renders him unworthy "to wear the cloth" is turned over to the civil authorities to be dealt with in the ordinary way.

The men who are sent to prison are far better treated now than they were even little more than a year ago.

Under the old system they were put to fatigue drill of a very wearying character, and it is not going too far to say that they invariably returned to their regiments in a worse condition than that in which they were when they were convicted.

Now-a-days, however, confinement in a military prison brings with it that humanitarian treatment which is so characteristic of the age. The men have to work, of course. That is inevitable. They, however, work in such a way that they are both physically and mentally improved.

Thus, they have physical drill and exercise for about two hours a day, and work at some industrial employment for six or eight hours a day. During the day also they receive school instruction, and as an inducement to read and improve their minds, they are allowed a light until nine o'clock in the evening in their cell, and are also given a book out of the library.

In this way their physical condition is improved, and they are induced to take on, and are trained into, habits of steadiness which are bound to serve them in good stead later on.

MRS. GASWELL: "The Emperor of Germany took 102 trunks with him on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem."

Mr. Gaswell: "I suppose his wife was with him."

Mrs. Gaswell: "Yes, the Empress's clothes were in the odd two trunks."

COSTLY COGITATIONS.—Newed: "A penny for your thoughts, darling."

Mrs. Newed: "Oh, they will cost you more than that."

Newed: "What were you thinking about?"

Mrs. Newed: "The dress I ordered yesterday."

Why?

WHY isn't thunder a sort of weather report?

Why isn't man's love for whisky a still affection?

Why shouldn't soldiers sleep on their knapsacks?

Why go to the Klondyke when our harbours are full of mines?

Why doesn't a fly on a bald head occupy a ticklish position?

A Trembling Pillar.

THE church of St. Nicaise, in the city of Rheims, is surrounded with pillars.

When a certain bell in the tower is rung, the top of one pillar sways to the extent of seven inches on each side, although the base is immovable, and the stones are so firmly cemented as to seem like a solid piece of masonry.

Although each of the four bells is about the same distance from the trembling pillar, none of the others has the slightest effect upon it.

Curiously enough, an adjoining pillar formerly swayed in the same fashion; then it became immovable, and the present trembling pillar became the eccentric one.

Pyramids to be Seen by Electric Light.

LIGHTING the pyramids of Egypt with electricity and the installation of a 25,000 horse-power plant, to cost some £100,000, is a plan now under consideration by the British Government, and it is reported that an American engineering firm are likely to receive the contract.

As outlined, the plan includes the generation of electric power at the Assouan Falls, on the Nile River, and its transmission a distance of one hundred miles through the cotton growing districts, where, it is believed, the cheap power will permit the building of cotton factories.

It is planned to use the power to illuminate the interior corridors of the pyramids, and also operate pumping machinery for irrigating large areas of desert along the Nile.

A Modern Minerva.

SHE is fair in form and feature, quite an airy, fairy creature, and of art a leading teacher; she can talk and play, and sing, too, in a manner quite divine.

She is up in French and Sanscrit, can survey with chain and transit, name a dance, and she can dance it, and in golf and tennis playing she is always first in line.

She can drive a fiery tandem, fish for trout and neatly land 'em, and she never talks at random, for she has good stores of knowledge upon which she loves to draw.

She is quite a politician, is a well-versed rhetorician, and a very keen logician, and she knows the hidden secrets that are wrapped up in the law.

She is very literary, very keen of wit—yes, very; and she's what all folks declare a very wonderful young lady who has wisdom without stint.

She is versed in Greek and Latin, paints on canvas, plaques, and satin; quoting poetry she's pat in, but she cannot bake a biscuit that is half as soft as flint.

SPOKE WHEN IT WAS TAKEN.—"It seems to me that I recognise the features, but the picture is somewhat blurred around the mouth."

"Yes; that is a speaking likeness of my wife."

"OLD Miss Sere saw a man under her bed at last."

"Good gracious! What did she say?"

"She told him to look out for the plastering. He was carrying the bed downstairs on his head. You see, she moved yesterday."

"AN old friend of mine," said the young member, "writes me that he is going to marry a theatrical woman."

"Theatrical woman?" repeated the Savage Bachelor. "Did you ever see one that wasn't?"

A GOOD HATER.—Notting: "How can you sit here with that Chaffer woman playing on that confounded piano of hers in the next flat?"

Helter: "Oh, I enjoy it. It reminds me that she is Chaffer's wife. I hate Chaffer, you know."

DENTIST: "Let's see. Oh, yes, it's that big one back there. Oh, we'll soon have that out. Have you ever taken gas?"

Hayricks: "I should say I have! We had a labour agitator boarding with us all last winter."

THE SECRETS OF SECRET SOCIETIES.

EXPLAINING THE STRANGE CEREMONIES OBSERVED IN MAKING NEW MEMBERS.

THOSE secret societies known to the world as Anarchists, Nihilists, Fenians (extreme), Ribbonists, the Clan-na-Gael (extreme), Assassins, Rosicrucians, Illuminati, Carbonari (a few left yet), and the like, have some queer, blood-curdling ceremonies, which they observe to the very letter on the induction of new members.

P.W., at not a little personal risk, has been collecting data concerning the initiative ceremonies in connection with the more prominent and powerful Brotherhoods of Blood.

In a certain house in a certain street in one of the dark spots of London an initiative ceremony was recently performed. It took place in a fairly spacious room at the back of a house near Soho Square. In an armchair, which was draped with red cloth, and fixed to a platform raised three or four feet off the ground, was seated the councillor. On a lower platform, sitting round upon red cloth covered chairs were a dozen or so of the subordinate officers.

Red was the prevailing colour. It was adopted for the men's cravats, their sashes, and shirts: the drawn blinds were of red material, the carpet was red, and the little lamps that gave such a dim light were red, too.

Presently a door at the other end of the room slowly opened, and there passed through, at a snail's pace, a young man, blind-folded, followed on his heels by two brothers with unsheathed daggers, gleaming and glittering in the gloomy, dismal light, and poised just above the young man's head. He was told to kneel down and bend his head over a basin containing an ounce or so of warm pigeon's blood. He did as directed, and the sponsors, placing their naked daggers upon his bared throat and neck, the quivering-lipped novice repeated the words of their oath, all the brothers standing in their places with unsheathed daggers raised in their right hand.

The Mogul descended from his throne, removed the bandage from the young fellow's eyes, and drank wine with him. The brothers afterwards circled round the chair and shook hands.

Another cut-throat society in London organised for the assassination of heirs to the various European thrones has a peculiar method of "naming" their new members. These creatures take any name the chief offers them, by which their identity is completely lost to relatives, friends, and the police.

The new member is led blindfolded into the Sanctum Sanctorum and stripped to the waist, the new name being tattooed upon his back, with the date and place of initiation done in symbols.

The final oath having been solemnly administered, a chosen member removes the bandage from the man's eyes, when he is welcomed as a member, but not until he has drawn a little of his own blood, with which he marks the forehead of a human skull.

Dealing a deathblow to the scions of Royalty is the aim of most foreign societies. Some are formed for the assassination of a nation's office holders, and perhaps that one formed among certain of the Chinese for the "removal" of the present Chinese Imperial office-bearers is the most remarkable. Its headquarters are in San Francisco. Each member takes the oath prescribed by the society to kill at risk of his own life any member he may fall across of the Chinese Government.

The latter are aware of the existence of this sect, and go in fear of their lives. Li Hung Chang is a target for them, and that is the reason why, during his last tour round the world, he avoided San Francisco.

Pigeons, hens, and rabbits, are offered up as holocausts in many of the ceremonies of secret societies. When a political personage has been "removed," and the assassin escapes, he flies from the sleuth-hounds of the law and takes refuge in the sanctum of his confederates abroad, who have been lying in wait for him, and on the next day baptise him in wine.

Their system of intimation of an expected *coup* is worked entirely by symbols and codes, and though the officers of the corresponding branch of any given society in a foreign city may be blindly ignorant of the personal appearance of the man they are told off to shelter, yet he may be distinguished among a thousand other men by certain marks, or gestures, or signs, all of which are, of course, perfectly understood.

A certain society of foreign would-be assassins in London fête their men who have made an "attempt." Baptising is their favourite ceremony. Under heavy penalties every member must be present, unless he is ill or languishing in prison. The guest sits in the middle of the room, and presently he is "crowned" by the chief, that is to say, the assassin draws the blood of a rabbit, which he catches in a bowl, and afterwards anoints the forehead of every man present with it. He next signs the black roll with the name of the life he attempted or has taken. A mark in blood is made against it, the assassin's number and lodge is registered, for these societies are perfect organisations, and the oath is repeated. Before the proceedings are over the murderer receives a gift from the treasury.

To celebrate an "attempt" all kindred societies have a little feasting on their own account, and some will sit for hours over the body of a headless fowl, in honour of the deed they are celebrating, which chief or "the guest" has decapitated; but the signing of the black roll is the great feature.

——It will contain an article entitled "Some of Aston Villa's Most Famous Fights," by the International, John Devey, who is captain of the club, and has kicked more goals this season in League Football than any other player.——

Questions Worth Answering.

REPLIES.

4308. Which Luxury has probably Played the Most Important Part in the History of this Country?

[By a strange coincidence the body of this Reply appeared in a short article published a fortnight ago, before this answer had been selected.—Ed.]

Pepper. In 1599 the Dutch raised the price of pepper against the London merchants from three shillings to six and eight shillings a pound. On the 22nd of September a meeting of London merchants was held to protest against this action. It was decided to start a company which should import pepper directly from the East Indies, and the result was that Queen Elizabeth sent out Sir J. Mildenhall to obtain facilities for commerce from the Great Mogul, and so the celebrated "John Company" was founded. At the time the company was established there was no particular reason why the English should go to the East Indies, especially as they were much occupied in other quarters. If the adventure had been postponed another century the Dutch, French, and Portuguese would have gained such a strong hold on India, that it would have been impossible to root them out. But the fact that the company reaped profits at the rate of 100 per cent. on their first twelve voyages turned the attention of all to India, and is no doubt responsible for the foundation of our Indian Empire and all that has resulted from it. The opening of China to western trade is practically due to the so-called "Opium War."

4309. In which Country, and at what Period, were the Luxuries of the Rich Unique?

Most probably in Rome, at the beginning of the Christian era. In all social, political, and commercial respects, Rome was the pivot on which the world turned, and to it gravitated everything that luxury could desire or wealth purchase. At the same time means of communication were slow and very imperfect, and only the very wealthy could afford luxuries imported from a distance, as for example, Colchester natives from England, or silks and spices from the far East. The rich Romans lived in palaces which shamed those of kings elsewhere, their bodies were clothed with the richest and most costly stuffs, and it was quite a usual thing for the Roman ladies to powder their hair thickly with gold dust. They were served by whole armies of slaves absolutely devoted to their physical and mental enjoyments. All this was unique, in so far as it was never equalled anywhere else; but it was in their extravagant devotion to the table that the Romans of this period mostly excelled. An expenditure of several thousand pounds on a single feast was quite common. The brother of the Emperor Vitellius gave him a feast at which 2,000 choice fish and 7,000 birds were served. The dish of peacocks' tongues is familiar to everyone, but it was less extraordinary than one served by Æsop the Comedian. It consisted of the tongues of parrots, everyone of which had been taught to talk. It cost between £50,000 and £60,000. The Empress Messalina never travelled without a train of 500 she-asses to supply milk for her morning bath; and such instances as these might be multiplied almost indefinitely.

4310. In the Event of an Invasion of England being Threatened, what General Policy would Probably be Pursued by our Land Forces?

A scheme of defence, in case of invasion, was formulated by the late General Hamley in 1889, and has since, with certain modifications, been adopted by the Government. After garrisoning the naval ports and arsenals, the remaining forces available would be divided into two parts. First, a force comprising all the volunteers in the London district, which would have the special duty of defending the Metropolis. Second, the main army of regulars, militia, and yeomanry to give battle to the invaders as soon after the landing took place as possible. If, for example, the enemy were to land on the Sussex coast, the volunteers would take up the position which has been already assigned to them on the North Downs, between Guildford and Dorking. In the meantime, the main army would concentrate as rapidly as possible on the South Downs, between Brighton and Portsmouth, using the latter as a base. By this arrangement the invaders would be put at a great disadvantage, for they could not advance on London without laying their flank open to attack, while to give battle to our troops they must wheel round, with the result that in case of a defeat their landing place could not be regained.

4311. Which English Ruler could have Said with the Greatest Truth, "L'Etat c'est Moi"?

Speaking of Henry VIII. the "Dictionary of National Biography" says: "Henry's unique position among English kings is owing to the extraordinary degree of personal weight which he was able to throw into the government of the realm. Strictly speaking, he was not an unconstitutional king: all his doings were clothed with the form of legality, but the whole machinery of State—both legislative and executive—moved simply according to his pleasure." The extraordinary subserviency of his Parliaments, and the assumption by the king of the headship of the Church, which meant much more in those days in England than it does now, joined to the fact that the nation was divided into two bitterly opposed sections on religious matters, left Henry, towards the close of his reign, practically the absolute master of the country. In the century following, Oliver Cromwell occupied a similar position. From the time when the Little Parliament in 1653 resigned its powers into his hands down to his death in 1658, Cromwell was for all practical purposes the government of England. During this period England and Cromwell were looked upon by foreign politicians as synonymous terms.

4312. Which British Possession would be of Most Value to a Foreign Power?

Of small isolated possessions there can be no doubt but that Malta would be the answer to the question, since it is the true key to the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. In the hands of France it would quite upset the balance of control, while to Russia its value would be almost inestimable. Of our greater possessions the most valuable, in view of recent developments, would be Cape Colony. Africa is the country of the future, and the Cape is the key of Africa. Cape Town, too, must always command one of the two chief routes to the East and South-East. The construction of the railway between Cairo and Cape Town will also add to the value of the latter, and the inevitable absorption of the Transvaal and the Free State will complete the British domination of all South and Central Africa that is worth having. India has been much coveted in the past, but it is doubtful in the first place whether any other European Power could hold it without an expenditure in men and money that would reduce its value to nothing or less than nothing. Of isolated possessions in the Far East Hong-Kong, would of course, be the most valuable.

4313. Is Political Unrest Favourable to Art?

We must distinguish between Arts practical, and Fine Arts. That political unrest is favourable to the former we may conclude, since it involves the development of instruments of destruction, besides being frequently the means of increasing our geographical and other knowledge. That such unrest is beneficial to the purer Arts, like painting, music or literature, is less apparent. For example, Raphael and Titian worked with Europe actively in arms; but war never came home to Leighton or Millais, though it did to Millet and Meissonier. Chopin composed in times of profound peace, but Wagner had to leave Saxony in consequence of political disturbances. Shakespeare wrote in the quiet of Elizabeth's reign, but Milton in stormier times, did equal work for Art. The best periods of Greek and Roman culture were not politically peaceful, but the closing decades of this century will probably be noted in history more for artistic development than political upheaval. There appears, therefore, no definite deduction to be drawn from analogy, and the inference is that the Fine Arts at least, are little affected by political environment.

4315. What is the Origin of the Form of Musical Entertainment which is Known as an Oratorio?

Perhaps the germ of the oratorio may be discovered in the mysteries, moralities, and miracle plays of the twelfth-fourteenth centuries, of which *Festum Asinorum*, performed at Beauvais and Sens in the twelfth century, and long remembered for the carol—"Prosa de Asinis"—it contained may be cited as an example. To St. Philip Neri, however, belongs the credit of raising these rude monkish efforts to the level of art. In the middle of the sixteenth century (1550) the Founder of the Congregation of Oratorians was wont, at the close of his sermons, to give a selection of popular hymns, or a scene, accompanied by music, from Scripture history. These, which were performed in the Oratory of S. Maria, in Vallicella, near Rome, conferred the name of oratorio upon entertainments of a like kind. The first true oratorio however, Emilio del Cavaliere's *La Rappresentazione del' Anima e del Corpo*, was not given until 1600. It was allegorical piece of much pretension, relying as much upon scenery and costume, as upon the quality of the music, for its success. Among the characters were Time, The World, Pleasure, The Soul, etc., and the orchestra, consisting of one liradoppia, one clavicembalo, one chitarone and two flauti, was kept out of sight of the audience. Cavaliere was succeeded by Kapsberger, Carissimi, Scarlatti and others, who paved the way for those great masters whose works are still supreme.

4318. Which is the Best Historical Example of a Nation Acquiring a "White Elephant"?

The most recent and glaring instance is the French acquisition of Madagascar, the third largest island in the world, with an area of 230,000 square miles, and a native population of over four millions. Yet at the time of the French occupation in 1896 there were only about 100 French inhabitants, besides officials; while of the little trade there was, but a small proportion was in French hands. Since then this state of matters has not materially altered, but in the interim the lives of 7,000 French conscripts have been sacrificed to the climate, which is very bad as a rule, and many more men have returned from the island to spread insidious diseases throughout their native country, or to die lingering deaths in its military hospitals. In money the losses can hardly be computed, but the cost annually to the national purse alone is admitted to be equal to half a million in English money. There is not the slightest prospect of the colony, as such, ever proving of any real use to the Republic. Italy found her Abyssinian "Protectorate" a similar "white elephant," but had the good sense to abandon it, even in face of unavenged reverses to her arms.

4319. Which is the First Recorded Instance of a Run on a Bank?

Although banking was practised among the Egyptians 600 years before Christ, and among the Romans almost in its modern form nineteen hundred years ago, yet, according to Gilbart, the first "run" of which we have any account in the history of banking occurred in the year 1667. At that date the bankers in England were the goldsmiths, who had a short time before begun to add banking to their ordinary business, and had become very numerous and influential. In 1669 the Dutch fleet sailed up the Thames, blew up the fort at Sheerness, set fire to Chatham, and burnt some ships of the line. This created the greatest consternation in London, especially among those who had entrusted their money to the bankers; for it was known that the latter had advanced large sums to the King for public purposes, and it was rumoured that now the King would not be able to repay the money. To quell the panic, a royal proclamation was issued to the effect that payments by the exchequer to the bankers would be made as usual. In 1671 there was another run on the London banks, when Charles II. shut up the Exchequer and refused to pay the bankers either principle or interest of the money which they had advanced. On this occasion, many of the banks and their customers were ruined.

QUESTIONS.

4341. Which may be considered the most [illegible] war on record?

4342. What is the physical explanation of the greater cruelty of southern as compared with northern races?

4343. What military order was created by a king so that he might bestow it on a sect outlawed by his own decree?

4344. Which is the earliest recorded instance of the use of poison?

4345. Which nation conducts its wars in the most inexpensive manner?

4346. Which part of the world affords the greatest variety of sport?

4347. In which part of the world is ready money worth most?

4348. What great national movement has been succeeded by the most profound reaction?

4349. How is it that scarcely a single ancient writer refers to the phosphorescence of the sea?

4350. What is the origin of the custom of plaiting straw in the manes and tails of horses which are to be sold at fairs?

CONDITIONS.

We shall be glad to receive from our readers replies to any of the questions asked here. Each reply must bear the writer's name and address. We shall select the best reply to each question, and shall pay at the rate of two guineas a column for all matter printed. The same reader may send replies to any number of questions, whether his own or not. Envelopes should be marked "Replies" in the top left-hand corner, and answers to the questions in any issue of the paper must reach us by first post on the Monday of the week following that for which the paper is dated. Payment will only be made for replies published. Authorities on which replies are based must be given where possible. Half-a-crown will be paid on publication for every question received which is considered worthy of insertion.

"There's a lady pianist at the museum who plays with her toes."

"Umph! That's nothing; my baby does that!"

He: "She is living under an assumed name."

She: "Horrible! What is it?"

He: "The one she assumed immediately after her husband married her."

"George, dear, you remember that lovely sideboard that was so cheap? Well, I've discovered a plan to make room for it."

"How, my dear?"

"By taking a larger house."

Not Inconsistent.—"I'm afraid of you," said Miss Kittish to Mr. Callow, saucily.

"That's stwange," replied Mr. Callow. "A few minutes ago you—aw—said that you were afwaid of nothing, doncher know."

"Well, what of that?"

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General Manager and Secretary.

—"Football on Snowshoes," "The Trainer and His Little Ways," "How Football Aids Railway Revenue,"—these are some of the articles which will appear in the ATHLETIC RECORD Christmas Number—

THE POOR MAN'S HOTEL.

MEN WHO STARVE IN HIGHLY-POLISHED BOOTS; WORKMEN WHO SPORT REAL SILK NECKERCHIEFS.

THE partiality for peculiarities of dress is not confined to the classes whose assured position and well-lined pockets enable them to indulge in their strange whims, regardless of chaff or comment.

We all know of the coster girl, whose taste leads her to expend considerable sums in broad-brimmed hats, adorned with costly ostrich feathers, while the rest of her wardrobe is composed of the commonest and cheapest materials, but circumstances having compelled me to temporarily take up my abode in one of the huge *caravanseras* identified with the name of Lord Rowton, certain facts in this connection came under my observation which were novel to me, besides proving both interesting and amusing.

Having nothing else to occupy my attention for the time being, I fell to studying the characteristics and habits of my fellow sojourners, and the result may possibly prove new and entertaining to those who have not had a similar experience.

For instance, one individual, whose shabby habiliments—with one notable exception—bespoke the last stage of poverty and decay, his coat being shiny and green with age, his trousers frayed at the bottom, and almost buttonless, while his hat would scarcely have been picked off a dust heap, was, nevertheless, provided with a good, sound pair of boots, invariably in a high state of polish.

It was the solicitude with which he was constantly shining up and dusting these articles of clothing that first attracted my notice. The least speck of dirt on their surface seemed to cause him the utmost uneasiness, though his linen was usually much soiled, and his hands unwashed.

The following incident will tend to show how deep-rooted was this peculiar fad of his:

One morning on visiting the cobbler's shop in the basement of the building, for the purpose of having my boots cleaned, I found this personage in possession of the stand, and heard him request the cleaner to give his boots an additional polish, and he should have an extra penny, the fixed fee being one penny.

Subsequently I came across him wandering disconsolately in the corridor, and, upon my approach, he came up to me with a humble request that I would advance him twopence to get his breakfast, as he was "broke." He promised to return the money in the evening.

I gave him the sum demanded, but at the same time expressed my surprise that he shou'd have expended his last coin in having his boots polished, and thereby run the risk of going without a meal.

He replied in a deprecatory tone that it was his one fancy to have well-cleaned boots, and that he cared nothing about the rest of his attire.

He returned the twopence the same day, so I have no reason to doubt his *bona fides* in the matter.

Another fellow lodger was especially careful about his linen, which was always spotless, though the rest of his wardrobe would scarcely have fetched half-a-crown at any second-hand dealers. To such a degree did he carry this creditable characteristic, that one night he informed me that he was going to walk about the streets until the morning, as he had not the modest but necessary sixpence to secure his bed, having spent his last shilling in paying for his laundry.

It struck me as a peculiar frame of mind that would induce a man to forfeit a night's lodging rather than wear a soiled collar, especially in an establishment where any collar at all is not *de rigueur*.

One inmate of the house rendered himself conspicuous by the number and various styles of his hats. He rarely appeared for more than two or three days with the same headgear. One day it was a "bell-topper," another, a "bowler," then again he would sport a "Trilby," or a golf cap, and in every instance the article was new, or at all events in good condition. His other clothing consisted of an ancient greasy tweed suit, which showed evidence that it had undergone a vast amount of service.

On passing one day when he was engaged at his locker, the door being open, I caught sight of at least eight or ten hats within, but I perceived little besides in the way of clothing.

One great, burly, six foot navvy had a penchant for gaudy silk neckerchiefs, and was constantly blossoming out with a new one, while his boots were allowed to remain, from week to week, thickly encrusted with successive layers of mud and clay, and, in fact, the whole of his dress was bespattered with the evidences of his calling.

Happening to descend to the lavatory at the same time as himself one morning, I observed that he spent fully a quarter of an hour at the mirror, tying and re-tying and otherwise arranging a gorgeous silk neckerchief, comprising all the colours of the rainbow, around his brawny, hairy throat, while the rest of his toilet, including his ablutions, had not occupied more than two minutes and a half at the outside.

If you want to Sell or Buy, Advertise in the "Athletic Record" Bargain Counter.

Love's First Kiss.

SWEETHEART, 'twas but a while ago, it scarce seems yesterday,
Though now my locks are white as snow, and all your curls are grey,
When, walking in the twilight haze, ere stars had smiled above,
I whispered soft, "I love you," and you kissed me for that love.

The first kiss, dear, and then your hand—your little hand so sweet,
And whiter than the white, white sand that twinkled 'neath your feet—
Laid tenderly within my own—have queens such lovely hands?
No wonder that the nightingale made sweet the autumn lands.

It seemed to me that my poor heart would beat to death and break,
While all the world, sweetheart, sweetheart, seemed singing for your sake;
And every rose that barred the way in glad and dying grace
Forgot its faded summer day, and leaning, kissed your face.

I envied all the roses then, and all the rosy ways
That blossomed for your sake are still my life's bright yesterdays;
But, thinking of that first sweet kiss, and that first clasp of hands *

. A Pencil-case will be given to the person who sends in the most appropriate line to complete this verse on the back of a post-card.—Address to "Line" Editor, 17 Henrietta Street, W.C., by first post on Monday, 19th December.

Scanning the Militiamen.

THE story is told of a militia regiment—whose reputation was none of the best—that on one occasion a detective from Scotland Yard asked to be allowed to inspect the regiment, to discover, if possible, whether a certain malefactor were in the ranks. Permission being given, the detective, accompanied by the adjutant of the regiment, made the tour of the various companies, front rank and rear rank.

When the official had got to the last man of the rear rank of the rear company, he stopped suddenly and gazed earnestly at the rather embarrassed warrior.

"You surely have made a mistake!" exclaimed the adjutant indignantly. "Why, you have pitched on the best man in the battalion. He has been with us for more than twenty years, and he is our pattern soldier. His arm is a mass of badges, and he is the example of all that is best in the life of a soldier. You surely cannot know him?"

"No," replied the detective; "I do not; but I know all the others."

Magazines and Milk.

COMPETITION is the life of trade, and advertising schemes are the life of competition. An advertisement of a really novel character has recently been distributed from door to door in Philadelphia.

It is an ordinary handbill, which reads as follows: "A new wrinkle in the milk business. Our agent will call on you to-morrow to solicit your patronage and explain the plan. To make it an inducement to give us your custom we make the following offer:

"To each pint customer daily we will give you your choice every month of two magazines from the following list." Then follows a list of a dozen monthly magazines.

"For one quart daily, four magazines; for three pints daily, six magazines; for two quarts daily, eight magazines. Or if you should prefer, we will furnish you for a pint order either of the morning papers; for a quart order two of the daily papers.

"In addition to the above, we will give all our regular customers the free use of a library of choice fiction of over 1,000 volumes. The only condition imposed is that all accounts shall, without fail, be paid every week. This rule applies to all, without any exception.

"We guarantee you the delivery of as good and pure milk as you have ever used." The name of a large milk dealer is signed to this queer offer.

"You, sir," said the poet, "are a bad judge of poetry."

"I, sir," retorted the editor, "am a judge of bad poetry."

IN her heart love and duty strove for mastery, and duty won.

"No man shall wed me," she exclaimed, with suffused eyes and quivering lips, "who does not promise me that if he is ever Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, he will use his influence to have battleships christened with water!"

Such was the ardour of his passion that Algernon hesitated not a moment.

"I promise," he cried, and fell upon his knees.

M.P.'s WHO HAVE DONE BIG THINGS.

SOME HAVE BEEN SENTENCED TO DEATH; OTHERS HAVE BEEN UP IN BALLOONS.

IT may be said that all the Members of the House of Commons have earned for themselves a certain fame in having fought for and gained the privilege of attaching the magic letters M.P. to their names; but, apart from this, there are a number of the frequenters of Palace Yard who are entitled to curious distinctions.

Two Members in the House, Mr. James J. O'Kelly, the Member for Roscommon, and Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien, the aged senior Member for the city of Cork, have had unique distinctions. Both these gentlemen have undergone the thrilling experience of being sentenced to death.

Some twenty-five years ago Mr. O'Kelly was the special correspondent of one of the American papers in Cuba. At that time this unsettled country was torn asunder in the throes of civil war. He was arrested as a spy, thrown into prison, and there sentenced to death, and it was only the timely arrival of the United States Consul on the scene that prevented his execution. He was actually led out to the place of execution, and the firing party had arrived when the intervention of the Consul stayed the fatal command.

Nor was this his only narrow escape. Mr. O'Kelly fought with the French against the Prussians, and afterwards, in Brazil, saved the life of the Empress. Afterwards he joined several of the campaigns instituted by the United States troops against Sitting Bull and the Sioux Indians. He pursued his perilous career in Mexico and Algiers, and afterwards endeavoured to interview the Mahdi in the Soudan, being lost to civilisation for nearly a year. On two occasions the good people of Dublin took to saying masses for the repose of his soul, but this irrepressible Parliamentarian has successfully surmounted his many difficulties and at the present time is the London correspondent of the IRISH DAILY INDEPENDENT.

The other member, Mr. O'Brien was tried for treason-felony in 1867, having in one of the Fenian risings led an assault upon a police barrack. He was arrested, tried and sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered. The barrack was set on fire, and at the trial it was stated that Mr. O'Brien, at great personal risk, had rescued the inmates, including women and children. When passing the sentence, the judge praised his gallant action, and in consideration of the fact his sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life, but he was amnestied some years later. Mr. O'Brien was formerly M.P. for Mayo, and in a by-election in 1895 successfully contested Cork City.

A painless death by newspaper paragraph has been a distinction conferred upon both Lord Milton and Mr. Fowler, but these gentlemen still live and enjoy the dignity of sitting in the House. Then again, there are some members who have been reported "missing." Excitement was caused some time ago by the report, happily unfounded, that Mr. Carvill, the Nationalist member for Newry, was missing.

In 1882 Mr. Powell, the Tory member for Malmesbury, ascended in a balloon, and was never again heard of. It was believed that the balloon had fallen into the sea. Another curious case was that of Mr. Douglas Pyne, who was member for West Waterford. He was last seen on one of the steampackets crossing between Dublin and Holyhead. A handbag and some letters belonging to him were found on board, and he is supposed to have fallen overboard, unobserved by either crew or passenger.

There are only three members who can claim to be ex-convicts. They are Mr. J. O'Connor, M.P., for West Wicklow, who spent four or five years in prison for his connection with Fenianism; Michael Davitt, the member for Mayo, who suffered for his connection with the same organisation, and Mr. O'Brien, the member mentioned above. Mr. John Daly might also have been included, but as he was a resident at Her Majesty's Prison, Portland, at the time of his election, the same was rendered void.

Mr. Ascroft, the member for Oldham, has earned for himself notoriety owing to his ambition to be the first comer on the opening of Parliament. This is his fourth session in the House, and on three out of the four he has been the first arrival at Westminster. He is truly an early bird. In 1895 he turned up at the remarkably early hour of 5 a.m. The following year, however, he improved upon this record, and secured his seat at 4 p.m. In 1897 he unfortunately overslept himself. The delay was fatal, for when he arrived at 6.25 a.m. it was only to find that he had been beaten by Mr. W. Johnston, of Ballykilbeg, who arrived five minutes before him. This year again Mr. Ascroft was the first arrival, and appeared on the scene at 5.30 a.m.

Although a number of members can claim relatives in the House, there is only one family that has sent three brothers to Parliament; the Healy family is represented by "Tim," Maurice, and Tom. The late Sir J. W. Pease, the Durham magnate, claimed the greatest number of near relations, his son, J. A. Pease; his brother, A. Pease; and his nephew, H. F. Pease, all represent constituencies. There are four instances of brothers who are sitting in the Commons. Dr. D. Ambrose and his brother, Dr. Robert, are both surgeons by profession and Anti-Parnellites as politicians.

—Readers of "The Swordsman" in the ATHLETIC RECORD will be glad to hear that a serial by the same author, under the title "A Dash for a Throne," will begin in the Christmas Double Number of the ATHLETIC RECORD.—

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE HOBBY?

HOW SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN THE WORLD SPEND THEIR LEISURE HOURS.

It has been said, and with much truth, that one of the greatest pleasures in life is to have a fanatical enthusiasm over something. It may be the collection of coins, books, pictures, old china, *bric-à-brac*, insects, or postage-stamps; it matters comparatively little what is the special hobby on which a man should mount, but the possession of at least one hobby, if not a complete stud of hobbies, is the first condition towards a thorough enjoyment of life.

Some of the hobbies of royalty are of especial interest. Queen Victoria's hobby, viz., the collection of miniature portraits, was described and illustrated in last year's Christmas number of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE.

In the Royal collection of miniatures at Windsor Castle may be seen the most exquisite examples of the art. They are arranged in chronological order, and date from Queen Elizabeth's reign to the present day.

The Princess of Wales has a remarkable collection of all the hats and bonnets she has worn during the years in which she has been the acknowledged leader of fashion.

Princess Beatrice is one of the greatest photograph-collectors in England. She has 800 photographs placed about her various rooms, while she has thousands safely stored away. The Duke of Edinburgh is an ardent stamp-collector, and his wife's magnificent stock of furs are worth over £10,000.

The Duchess of Fife is never happier than when, fishing-rod in hand, she is after the salmon. Her first "catch" of the season is always sent to her illustrious grandmother, the Queen. Princess Charles of Denmark is very clever in stuffing and mounting small birds and animals, in wood-carving, and in the working of iron and copper.

One of the Kaiser's numerous hobbies is the collection and wearing of uniforms of all sorts and all nations; his wife, the Empress, is a talented artist in sculpture and painting, while the Dowager Empress Frederick has developed the ability of an expert in raising bees. The young Queen Wilhelmina of Holland has a miniature farm, the produce of which she gives to the poor, and to the hospitals.

The King of Greece fancies swimming and angling, and the Emperor of Japan grinds out poetry by the yard.

The Sultan of Turkey has a mania for collecting carriages; while the Czar of all the Russias is credited with being the best Royal cyclist, as well as a collector of bird's nests and postage-stamps.

The Duchess of Albany has a penchant for making artificial flowers. The Marchioness of Lorne is a sculptor of no mean order, and she has turned out some very successful work from living models. Princess Marie of Roumania collects scent bottles. The Queen of Portugal is fond of hunting and bull fights, while King Humbert of Italy finds amusement in making boots and shoes.

The Crown Princess of Sweden and Norway is an enthusiastic photographer; during a visit to Egypt she took nearly 2,000 photographs.

Among illustrious personages with queer fads must be numbered Prince Leopold of Bavaria; his collection of beetles is the most extensive and complete in the world.

Mr. Alfred Morrison's collection of autographs and letters number about 20,000, and is valued at £70,000. It includes a letter written by Mary Stuart. This interesting bit of paper costs its present owner a thousand pounds.

Autograph letters vary greatly in value. For instance, it will cost you from £5 to £6 for an epistle penned by Queen Victoria or the Prince of Wales.

Almost everybody has a hobby nowadays. The schoolboy collects stamps and birds' eggs, the middle-aged man collects stuffings and butterflies, the old man collects books and bad odds as he pores over the treasures of the second-hand book-shops. A man in Scotland has a peculiar hobby. He collects gas-meters and inscribes them with the words, "Heroes of Doughty Deeds."

Herbert von Bismarck has an equally curious hobby. He collects thermometers. He has about thirty in his house, and they can't all agree on the temperature. Some, in fact, have crawled down to zero, while others have bravely climbed to blood heat at the same time.

Some remarkable collections have been left behind by the late Mr. Hamilton, a wealthy and eccentric Englishman. One consists of some 20,000 buttons, representing all the uniforms of the different armies of the world. Another collection is made up of the teeth of all the most formidable wild beasts on earth.

But of all expensive hobbies, perhaps that of "porcelain hunting" is the most costly, as a vase of any age, or with a history worth speaking about, costs hundreds of pounds. Some time ago £2,400 was paid for a vase and cover, together with a pair of jardinières, and stands 8½in. high. They came from the collections of the Earl of Coventry and the Earl of Dudley.

A well-known lady of title is forming a "Shakesperian" garden, for which she is by degrees gathering every flower and shrub mentioned by the immortal bard.

Edison is probably one of the busiest men in the world, still he has a hobby—that of raising fowl—none of your common barn-door variety, but fancy birds, some of them valued at twenty-five guineas apiece.

Mr. McKinley, the President of the United States, has a truly remarkable collection of walking sticks. There are not only specimens of the most varied kinds of wood—bamboo, ebony, cane, sandalwood, holly, lemon and orange tree, chestnut, box, oak, and vine—but there are also some composed of cork and stone, glass, indiarubber, buffalo and rhinoceros hide.

A model dairy is the hobby of the Baroness Adolph de Rothschild. In one of the walls of her boudoir at Brittany Villa is a sliding panel of plate glass, through which at pleasure she can see into her beautifully fitted-up cowshed, where the animals feed from marble mangers and are milked into silver pails.

Mrs. Vanderbilt has a unique collection of thimbles which have been the property of female celebrities, including one that was worn by Queen Elizabeth, and another that belonged to Queen Victoria when a girl of fourteen.

Sir Donald Currie, when a schoolboy, owned a large number of small boats, and was always devoted to nautical affairs. He has now an unrivalled collection of pictures by Turner.

A curious fad of Madame Patti's is to preserve every one of the many hundreds of costumes she has worn during her operatic career. They are all stowed away in one of the spare rooms of Craig-y-Nos Castle.

Mascagni, the composer of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, has a passion for collecting watches and always carries three of them in his pockets. Princess Pauline de Metternich devotes her spare time to cattle-raising, while amateur gardening is in high favour with the eminent tenor Mr. Edward Lloyd.

Farming is the principal recreation of Madame Modjeska, and this is a pursuit which engages the attention of W. S. Gilbert when not engaged play-writing.

A curious hobby is that of collecting railway guides. A director of the Midland Railway Company has a collection of about 7,000. One edition of Bradshaw is worth £20 per copy, and a half-burnt guide, found on the scene of the terrible railway accident at Abergele, changed hands not long since for twelve guineas.

Mrs. Bernard Beere has a vast collection of dancing-dolls, mechanical toys, and money-boxes. Miss Ellen Terry has always been very fond of pets, especially cats and birds. She possesses a gift for training animals, and soon tames birds that have resisted the coaxings of other mistresses.

Lord Lonsdale has a splendid collection of whips—some of them are worth £100 apiece; and the Duke of Cambridge has the finest assortment of snuff-boxes in the world.

Sardou's hobby, building houses for himself, is an expensive one, and in gratifying it, he has expended no inconsiderable portion of his wealth.

Lord Grimthorpe is perhaps the most distinguished amateur clock-maker in the United Kingdom.

Lord Winchilsea has one of the finest collections of eagle's eggs in existence, and he prizes them more owing to the fact that he has collected them all with his own hands.

Claude Leighel, called one of the greatest comedians in Italy, has a curious fad for carving portraits of himself, in character, on large horse-chestnuts.

The Duc d'Orléans has a wonderful collection of sporting trophies, numbering some 3,000 stuffed wild animals, birds, and reptiles, together with costumes, arms, and curiosities gathered from all parts of the earth.

M. Philippe le Renottiere Ferray, of Paris, has a collection of stamps, said to be the most valuable in the world. It is worth no less than £50,000.

A YOUNG married man never realises that he is getting old until he is compelled to pay full fare for his first born when he has him on a tramcar.

"CHOLLIE is what might be vulgarly called a swell dresser, is he not?"

"Well, rawther. He won't sleep without a pair of freshly-creased pyjamas."

"DON'T you think that fellow who broke his engagement because the girl went to the jeweller and inquired the price of the ring a little sensitive?"

"I think he was wise. A woman like that would be wanting her husband to keep an account of his private expenses."

GUEST (to cabby): "Now, cabby, since you've been very quick in getting here, what'll you have, whisky, cigar, or beer?"

CABBY: "Well, if ye don't mind, sir, I'll take the cigar after the whisky, 'an while I'm lightin' me cigar ye kin send me the beer."

RESULT OF FOOTBALL COMPETITION NO. 13.

The prize of £25 is this week carried off by Mr. ALFRED ASTLES, 32 Grosvenor Street, Downing Street, Manchester, whose forecast of the results of the matches contained but one mistake.

Football Competition.

PRIZES OF £1,000, £100, £25.

THE Football Clubs named below play on Saturday, December 17th. To the reader who names the correct result of all these matches we will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED POUNDS. In the event of two or more being correct the money will be divided.

If no competitor gives a quite correct solution TWENTY-FIVE POUNDS will be divided amongst those nearest. If between now and the close of the football season any one competitor wins the hundred pounds prize in full three times consecutively we will make him a further present of ONE THOUSAND POUNDS.

Football Coupon No. 16.

Matches to be played on Saturday, December 17th.

Cross out which you consider will be the losing clubs. For a draw don't cross out either.

1 Stoke	v	2 Notts County.
3 Aston Villa	v	4 Everton.
5 Sheffield United	v	6 Sunderland.
7 Newcastle United	v	8 Sheffield Wednesday.
9 Preston North End	v	10 Blackburn Rovers.
11 Liverpool	v	12 West Bromwich Albion.
13 Notts Forest	v	14 Derby County.
15 Walsall	v	16 Bussiem Port Vale.
17 Glossop North End	v	18 Small Heath.
19 Brighton United	v	20 Reading.
21 Celtic	v	22 Heart of Midlothian.
23 Richmond	v	24 Coventry.
25 Edinburgh Wanderers	v	26 Oxford University.
27 Llanelly	v	28 Swansea.
29 North	v	30 South.
31 Northampton	v	32 Mousley.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

CUT OUT COUPON AND POST TO US UNFOLDED.

In Pearson's Athletic Record published on Wednesday, December 14th, you will find the past performances of the above clubs dealt with, and their comparative chances in these matches fully discussed.

THINGS TO REMEMBER.

1. Coupons may be sent either from P.W. or the *Athletic Record*. In the latter paper will be found valuable hints as to which side is likely to win.
2. Nobody must enter for this competition who will not abide by the Editor's final decision.
3. All coupons must reach us not later than Saturday, December 17th, first post. Any envelope bearing a postmark later than Friday, December 16th, will be disqualified.
4. Competitors should cut out the above coupon, score it as directed, put their name and address in the space provided, and send to "FOOTBALL No. 16," Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, W.C.

For the convenience of those who wish to make more than one attempt we have prepared separate coupons, which we will send by post to applicants at the rate of twenty for a shilling. Those who want them must send postal orders for as many sheets of twenty as they require, and must inclose a stamped addressed envelope. Coupons will be sent by return and are made available for any week. The sheets may be cut up and the coupons used singly if desired.

APPLICATIONS FOR COUPONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO S. ARTHUR PEARSON LIMITED, HENRIETTA STREET, LONDON, W.C.

NOW IS YOUR CHANCE!

Order the Christmas Double Number of the ATHLETIC RECORD, ready on December 14th. Insist upon your newsagent keeping a copy for you. We shall give every reader of this issue one shilling, or, rather, the equivalent to a shilling. Every purchaser of the ATHLETIC RECORD Christmas Double Number—ready on Wednesday next—will be given a sheet of Twelve Football Coupons Free.

Order the Xmas Double Number of the A.R. Now—Price 2d.

—In addition to all these attractions, each copy of the ATHLETIC RECORD Christmas Number will contain 12 Football Coupons, which will be available any week during the season. Order at once or you will get left, as there can be no reprint.

ACROBATS ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD.

SOME CLEVER KICKS PRACTISED BY FOOTBALL EXPERTS.

PLENTY of pace, a certain amount of disregard for accident, and skill in straightforward passing will do much towards making a first-class footballer. But there is more than this required to make the popular favourite with the football crowd, and the man who would become the pet of the thousands who week after week frequent his club grounds must nowadays add to the general requisites some speciality which shall single him out from the other players and create expectation whenever it is seen that he is "on the ball."

Bassett's favourite dodge.

To this end every football professional in this country more or less aims, but to bring off some of the very clever tricks which are associated with the names of the most popular favourites requires an inventiveness and a pedal dexterity which is not the lot of every man who follows the footer game.

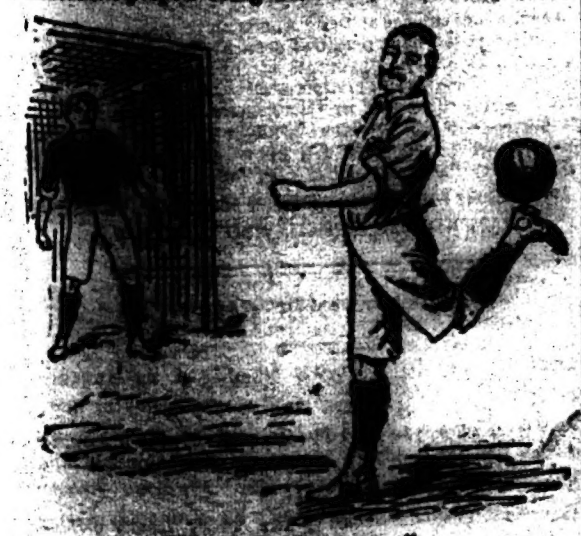
One of the prettiest and most effective of tricks, which baffles sometimes the oldest hands, is the back kick delivered with the heel.

To do this at slow speed is easy enough, but it requires a lot of judgment to run at top speed after a ball which is also progressing rapidly ahead of you in the same direction, and, alertly leaping over it, wedge your foot down suddenly with a backward motion, thus causing the sphere to reverse its course.

A pretty pass to the left.

The novice at this game will invariably find himself either landing on top of the ball, and rolling ignominiously over on to the turf, or else he will utterly overlean the flying leather, and find his effort of little effect.

Perhaps the cleverest exponent of this feat is the smart and tricky Midland footballer, Bassett. It was a favourite dodge of his when playing on the wing. In the Wales v. England international match some three seasons ago he fooled his opponents easily time after time by means of this clever trick. Working with his partner, he would race down the ground with the ball, immediately upon being overtaken, however, he would leap over the ball, and hack it back to his partner, who was following behind. Of course, his opponent had overrun himself. In one memorable run Bassett performed this feat three times running, each time getting the ball from his partner, and duping the opposing backs in a manner that caused the crowd to laugh and dance for glee.



This doesn't often come off.

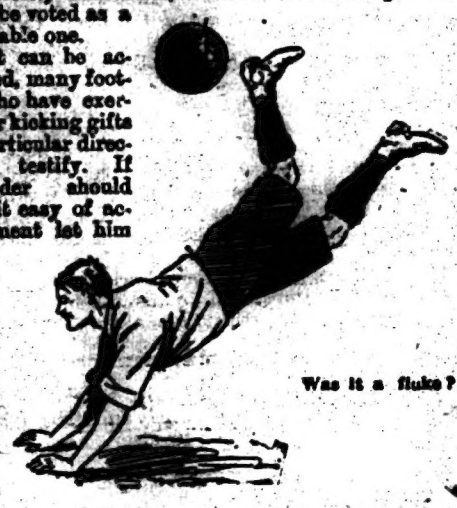
It seems easy enough to see a first-class forward travel like lightning after the ball, and then, whilst still going at full speed, pass the ball with, say, his left foot at right angles to a partner on the right. But the amount of dexterity this performance implies is only to be realised when one has attempted the feat at a great pace, and has found his legs hopelessly entangled with each other, and himself lying in a heap on the grass. The secret of success in this operation lies in jumping altogether off the ground, whilst the left foot is brought smartly across. The foot that is not kicking must be off the ground, or woe betide the footballer.

Stewart's master-kick.

One of the most practised kicks of the professional footballer is that very showy one of kicking with the heel over the head. The illustration shows exactly how the trick is accomplished. The feat is of special value at a critical moment, when the ball has been returned over a player's head, just too far back for him to get it in any other way. To turn would be to lose a second or two, and the ball would be on the rebound before it could be kicked in that way, whilst the time lost would give another player the chance to run in and charge.

To turn promptly round and attempt to toe the ball over the head would be almost of a certainty to misjudge the kick. So much depends upon the eye in football that it is fatal to take it off the ball for an instant in such a critical moment. The best course, therefore, is the most brilliant one depicted. If it "comes off" and a goal is scored the player may rest assured that his popularity is established for the season, whilst if it is not completely successful, at least the attempt will probably be voted as a commendable one.

That it can be accomplished, many footballers who have exercised their kicking gifts in this particular direction can testify. If any reader should imagine it easy of accomplishment let him try the easier experiment of throwing a penny over his head and catching it behind his back. This is difficult enough without practice, but it requires double the judgment to throw a ball over your head and kick it in any required direction with the heel of your boot.



Was it a fluke?

The next illustration shows the kind of feat which was successfully accomplished by Stewart, of Bedminster, in a recent match against New Brompton. Stewart fell when close in goal, but he succeeded in kicking the ball over his head and landed it in the net, amid ear-splitting yells of delight from his supporters outside the ropes. It is not a kick that should be regularly practised, for it is only in an accident that one requires the use of such an exceptional trick. But Stewart's effort is not the only one in this direction. It has been done again and again, and shows how accurately and how readily a trained man can use his kicking abilities in whatever position he may be placed. If the toe or heel can get at the ball at all, you may trust the smart "pro" for doing his level best with it, whatever the emergency.

But above and beyond all kicks was that which was once achieved in a small match in a Notts village. The man who accomplished the feat was something of an amateur acrobat. He was running to meet a ball which was fisted out of goal, when he, unfortunately, slipped, tripped on the grass, and pitched head foremost.

Winning by a head.

It was very tantalising thus to lose what was a good chance to return the ball into goal, but as he fell he remembered his gymnastic training, and dropping on to his hands he flung his legs into the air. Whether by accident pure and simple, or whether by clever judgment, his heel caught the flying ball, and before the goalkeeper could recover from his astonishment, the ball had found a resting place in the corner of the net. Several players have tried the same trick, but it doesn't "come off," nor would it be particularly useful even were it a recognised accomplishment.

A combined display.

Many a player who has not particular dexterity with his feet yet has proved his worth in a team by the skill with which he uses his head for kicking purposes. A clever "header" is of the greatest use when a corner is being kicked, and hundreds of goals are scored during the course of a season.

Generally a man will jump off the ground to give the blow more force. That is when he wishes to return the ball as far as possible. But in any case he always punches at the ball with his head, and the energy he imparts to the blow neutralises the energy of the ball which it has gained during its flight through the air. This is the simple secret of all successful "heading."

Some of the performances with the head are very clever and very effective from the show point of view. To receive a ball on the side of the head and pass it in a rectangular direction to a colleague looks well and often baffles the enemy. Height, too, is an advantage in "heading," for the man who can reach the more inches off the ground can manifestly get at the ball sooner than his opponent. Such tantalising strokes as that exhibited in the illustration, in which one man overreaches the other, both waiting to head the ball, are often witnessed in first-class football.

'Twixt the cup and the lip.

If you are dull, buy this week's HOME NOTES, and enter for one of the numerous competitions.

MAKING WAX DOLLS FOR THE QUEEN.

P.W. Tells You How the Whole Thing is Done.

A real British-made wax-doll is a rarity; real British wax-doll makers are rarer. In this vast London of ours, whose population is over 5,000,000 souls, you could count the number of wax-doll-making firms on one hand.

P.W. came across a wax-doll maker the other day, and forthwith interviewed him on his craft.

"This is the process," said the manufacturer, as he tood before a big melting-pot, containing boiling wax, and stirred the contents carefully. "This is bees-wax melted down. To show you how it's done, I'll cast a complete doll, one of five to be eventually sent to the Queen—presents, I suppose, for some of the young princesses.

"Now, with this measure I scoop some of the boiling wax into this kettle; then I pour the contents into this plaster-of-Paris mould, and let it remain for about five minutes until the undersides harden to a depth not exceeding an eighth of an inch. I lift the mould up and pour the residue of the wax back into the pot again. We shall leave the mould to cool for about ten minutes.

"Yes," he went on to say, while the cast was cooling, "we English people have ourselves to blame for losing the wax-doll trade. We have been in the business 125 years. Forty years ago, a wax-doll maker wouldn't work more than one day a week, for he made sufficient in that one day to keep him and his family for seven days. You needn't, therefore, be greatly surprised at the Germans capturing the market. The British workman has always been too independent——worse luck for British trade and enterprise.

"Now this cast is fairly hardened," said he, throwing it out of the mould, "and after I have cleaned it off roughly the shape of the eyes will be cut out, and the glass eyes inserted. That done, the next process is the insertion of the head of hair, every hair being put in singly by hand, there being between 30,000 and 40,000.

"It will take a full day to complete the work. A quick worker can insert about 3,000 hairs per hour. The hairs, you see, are put in by a spatchelor—a flat sort of needle—the worker feeding it from the hairs she holds in her left hand. The spatchelor only forces the end of each hair into the wax while the mask or doll's head is resting on the worker's lap.

"To close the wax in over the ends of the hairs inserted, she heats the other end of the spatchelor in a gas flame and then passes it over the wax and the hair ends, thus uniting both. A cleaning-off process follows later, after which the cheeks and lips are coloured with dry colour, put on by a dabber made of cotton-wool.

"The figure is then sent back to the hair-inserting room, where the tedious process of inserting the eyelashes and the eyebrows is done, upon the completion of which the whole of the wax work is again cleaned off, this time with a secret spirit, after which it is powdered with starch-powder, the process finally ending with another cleaning off.

"Wax dolls for the members of the Royal Family are made and finished to order. The faces of the dolls are not of that school usually associated with shop-window dolls. As a rule, Royal dolls have to be made from photos sent. This year I hear that a great number of the dolls for the Queen will be miniature Queen Wilhelmina's, and that they will be dressed in facsimile coronation robes, such as the young Queen wore at her recent coronation.

"To mould a likeness from a photo, or from life, we first work it out in clay, then we take a plaster-of-Paris casting from it, this serving as a mould."

P.W. has been making exhaustive inquiries throughout the wax-doll trade at home for the purpose of finding out whether or not the most beautiful, artistic, and expensive wax dolls in the world are produced in Great Britain.

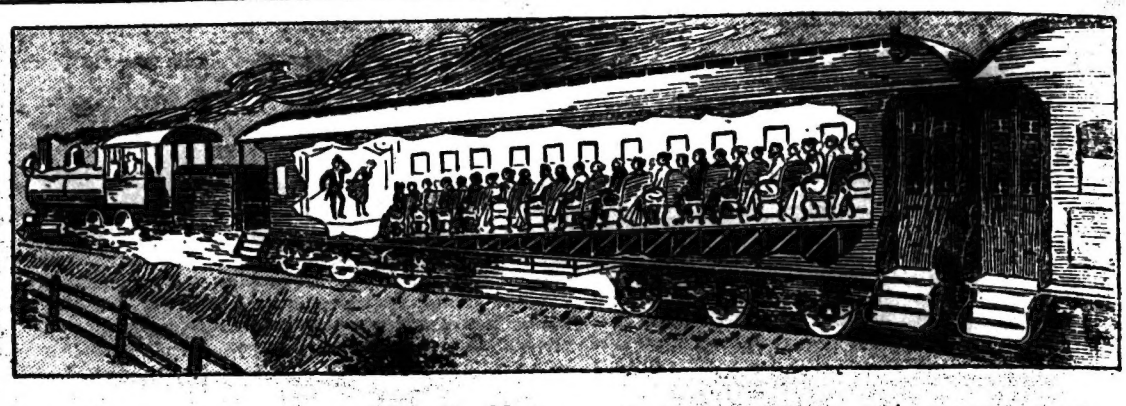
So far as expensive wax dolls are concerned these cherubic-faced idols of our little girls can be made at very big prices on the Continent. In Germany and France, for instance, special orders for wax dolls have frequently been placed with Continental manufacturers costing as much as £5 a-piece.

In point of artistic finish it is consoling to British pride to know we can hold our own with our competitors on the other side of the Channel; but our trade is bad.

It will surprise you to learn that the steadily increasing revival of British wax-doll work owes its impetus to the aristocracy, who are, in an amateur way, going in for making waxen figures of members of their respective families—puppets, you would call them—which serve all the purposes of a picture or photograph. These are then put under a glass case, and they look very well.

A London wax-doll maker is just now engaged on a group of doctors and nurses for a small private hospital in the country.

A short while ago this workman completed the group of a nobleman's family circle—Tussaud's on a small scale. I suppose the idea originally came from Baker Street, and a very sensible idea it is, too. Such work as this is always done in England, and runs into an expensive matter where the group is a large one. Not long ago a man repaired a wax-doll which formerly belonged to the old Duchess of Wellington, a proof that a waxen image is not so perishable as your ordinary photograph.



She Was Glad She Didn't Yell.

A certain City man delights in doing odd jobs about his suburban home. He cuts his grass and trims the paths and handles a paint-brush like an old master.

Carpentering tools come handy to him, too, and the sound of his merry saw makes pleasant music for such of the neighbours as have no objection to being awakened early. In short, he is a clever, all-round workman, and decidedly handy to have about the house.

One day not long ago the woman of the house next door happened to come out to her back door. There she casually looked over the low fence into the handy man's yard.

What she saw frightened her so that she couldn't move hand or foot.

The handy man was lying prone on his back, his body concealed beneath the porch, but with his face in strong relief. He was very pale, his hair was dishevelled, and his eyes were rolled up and fixed in a ghastly intentness. Against his breast he seemed to be pressing some deadly weapon that glistened as a ray of light touched it.

The woman at the door tried to scream, and couldn't. She knew the handy man was committing suicide.

He panted, his face grew red, and his form seemed convulsed.

The woman on the porch caught her agonised breath, and was about to let out a forty horse-power yell when she heard the supposed suicide anxiously ask:

"Isn't it through yet?"

"Yes," said a voice from above, "it is just through."

About this time the woman on the porch understood that the handy man was boring an auger hole through the floor of his porch, that the deadly weapon was an auger, and that the servant girl was on hand to watch the operation.

Then the woman next door was glad she didn't yell.

A Winner.

He wrote a catchy drinking song,
The best of all by far,
'Twas bound to win, because it had
A stop at every bar.

Would Most Likely Turn Grey.—Anna: "Only the other day she told me that nothing could induce her to marry a man with red hair."

Aline: "Oh, I suppose she realised that it wouldn't be red long if he married her."

"I have just moved into the flat across the way," said the stranger as he approached the counter, "and I wish to open an account with you, payable monthly. My name is Smith."

"Certainly; happy to meat you, Mr. Smith," returned the polite butcher.

Gentleman: "May I offer you my umbrella, miss?"

Lady: "Thank you, I don't think these few raindrops will do much damage."

Gentleman: "Then, perhaps you'll allow me to accompany you until it commences to come down harder."

"Just by way of a hint, you know, I told her she looked sweet enough to kiss."

"Well?"

"Well, she said that was the way she intended to look."

"And so——"

"Precisely."

"What was it I heard about your new cook?" I asked a woman I knew, day before yesterday.

"I can't tell you," she said. "I can't talk about it."

"Is it as interesting as that?" I asked.

"Oh, no," said she, "but I belong to the D. D. D. Club."

"And what's that?"

"Why," she made answer, "it's a club of women who have sworn never to talk of dress, domestics or diseases."

A THEATRE IN A TRAIN.

Which, moreover, may be Used as a Ballroom, or on Sunday as a Church.

A few years ago you would never have believed that the day would come when you could dine in a railway carriage; you can do it now every day.

It is therefore not surprising to read that an enterprising railway in the United States, is on the point of putting upon the rails a carriage specially built and equipped for the purpose of giving theatrical performances. This startling innovation, which marks a new era in the comforts of railway travel, will be introduced to start with on the Black Diamond express, a through train running from New York to a distant point in the Lehigh Valley, in April next.

The shows to be given will consist of variety performances, the stage being too small for all but the simpler theatrical productions. Of course there will be charges made to witness these performances, similar in price to those paid at the regular theatres.

The novelty of going to the theatre while being whirled across the country by day or night is expected to appeal strongly to the majority of travellers. Even in our own little island a long railway journey is tiring, and time hangs very heavily on our hands; and any diversion is gladly welcomed.

These new railway theatre-carriages will be built with special attention to the problem of shutting out as much noise as possible, and the stage will be provided with a powerful sounding-board. There is, therefore, no practical obstacle to presenting a theatrical entertainment under these novel conditions.

The interior of the carriage will resemble as far as possible that of a regular theatre, save that of course there will not be any dress-circle or gallery. The stage will extend across the carriage about five feet above the floor. It will be framed in a miniature proscenium arch, decorated in white, green, and gold, embellished with masks and the conventional stage emblems. A row of footlights, consisting of little incandescent lamps, will extend across the front of the stage in proper form.

It is proposed to build the stage fourteen feet deep, provide regular exits, customary stage scenery, and usual drop-curtain.

The latter will be painted with special bits of scenery selected from the more famous spots the railway passes through.

The seats will be built on a slight incline, as shown in the sketch, in order that the occupants of the rear seats will get a good view of the stage. An aisle down the centre of the carriage will divide the rows of chairs.

So far as the paying part of the scheme is concerned the authorities have no fear on that score. Taking an ordinary through train consisting of about eight carriages the number of passengers carried is about 500, and at least half of these will, it is assumed, be theatre-goers.

The carriages will be provided with a buffet, so that waiters may be summoned by electric bells placed at the seats.

Each carriage will also be provided with a permanent orchestra consisting of a piano, violin, cornet and flute, which will occupy the customary place in front of the stage.

There will be continuous performances throughout the day, attendants promenading the corridors of the train in the interim announcing the coming show and selling programmes.

There will not be any box-office on the theatrical train, but passengers will be able to purchase their tickets for the theatre at the stations along the line.

A curious side to this novel idea is that the theatre will, on Sundays, serve as a church, the little stage will be converted into a pulpit, while the piano will lead the congregation in song.

Various other new and strange ideas are being mapped out in connection with the scheme. For instance, it is intended to convert the stage into a bulletin board on the nights after elections or during stress of war or other excitement, and throw the latest returns or news upon a screen. This information will be telegraphed to the train while it is in motion.

Again, when you have had enough of play-acting, the chairs can be easily removed and packed into another part of the train, and the theatre converted into a ballroom, where, in the midst of palms and ferns, the travellers may dance away the weary hours of long journeys.

Mr. M. P. Shiel has written a most stirring serial story, which will commence in the Christmas Double Number of "P.W." Do not, on any account, fail to secure a copy of that issue.

DOGS THAT SING YOU SONGS.

AND SOME HAVE VERY FINE VOICES, TOO.

IT is generally supposed that dogs show their hatred of music by howling in pitiful fashion whenever they hear it, as if it were a real torture to them. The idea has, however, been expressed that perhaps when dogs howl at music it is not from pain or fear, but because they are striving to imitate it as well as they can.

In support of this opinion, which certainly must be considered rather daring, it has been pointed out that the dog which in his own way accompanies the piano with his howling is certainly not always compelled to listen to the music, but often voluntarily remains in the room without showing any desire to get out of hearing.

The German naturalist who has uttered this somewhat novel view says he certainly has not the impression that the howling of the dog is always a sign of suffering, and when dogs howl at music it has often seemed to him as if they gave voice with gusto. He thinks there are indeed some instances in which we may speak directly of an incomplete imitation of the music, though he admits that there is room on this point for some degree of self-deception.

A certain German pastor possessed, when a student, a poodle named Rolla, with which he often gave genuine performances in the circle of his friends. He used to sing the "Lorelei" in a falsetto voice, when the dog immediately joined in, and it could be clearly perceived that her voice, to some extent, followed the rising and sinking of the notes. Although there was, of course, no question of a real imitation of the tune, yet the spectators undoubtedly received the impression that the dog, which was very proud of her art, was earnestly striving to accompany her master's singing.

The German naturalist, Scheitlin, says it has been too readily taken for granted that music is painful to the dog, and it is a question whether the animal is not really seeking to accompany it in his own way. Romanes says that except the singing ape there is besides man no mammal that has an acute perception of pitch, but he once heard a dog, which used to join in with his howling whenever anyone sang, follow the prolonged notes of the human voice with sounds of almost identical pitch. And Dr. Huggins, who, as Romanes says, had a fine ear, told him that his big dog Kepler, used to follow the prolonged notes of the organ in the same way.

There are, however, still more remarkable examples given by the German writer who thinks so highly of the dog as a musician. The French naturalist Alix, in his recent book treating of the intelligence of animals, quotes a certain Father Pardies, who refers to two dogs which had been taught music, and one of them sang his part along with his master.

The same author refers also to a dog named Capucin which belonged to Habeneck, Director of the Opera, which sounded the "la" and sang very agreeably a magnificent fragment from Mozart. Then there was in Paris, and often seen by many scientific men, the dog belonging to Dr. Bennati, which sang the scale perfectly.

Alix further declares that he himself knew a dog which accompanied his mistress when she ran up the scale on the piano.

The great philosopher, Leibnitz, said that he once saw a dog whose imitative faculty went so far that he could speak more than thirty words, could give his master a suitable answer when spoken to, and could articulate all the letters of the alphabet quite clearly, except M, N, and H!

Enough to Make One Look Sad.

"YOU look a trifle doleful to-night," said one of a group of gentlemen to another.

"Well," replied the gentleman addressed, "I have as good a right to look doleful to-night as any man I know of."

"What's up," asked the other members of the group.

"You know that I am an ardent bicyclist, and I have a boy who has the same passion. This evening, just after dark, as I was coming down the street to the club, walking along thinking of nothing in particular, I was hit in the back by what seemed to be a locomotive, and knocked sprawling into the ditch. It was muddy there, and when I had collected my scattered senses, I was all covered with dirt, and felt exceedingly angry. I looked round to see what had hit me, and found a young man and a safety bicycle on the pavement all tangled up. I was angry, as I said before, and without stopping to think what I did, I took that young man by the coat collar and kicked him off the pavement. Then I jumped on the bicycle, stamped all the spokes out of the wheels, and generally disfigured it."

Here the gentleman stopped. And one of the audience said:

"Well, why should that make you feel as you do? You did the right thing."

"I suppose I hadn't ought to feel so," said the speaker, "but, you see, it was my boy and my bicycle."

John Bull—Money-Lender.

BRITAIN is the great money-lender of the world. A statistician estimates that she has £110,000,000 invested in land and mortgage in countries abroad. She lends to foreign governments and municipalities an average of £40,000,000 annually. She finances railways in India, Canada, the United States, Australia, South Africa, and South America, her investments of this class aggregating £400,000,000.

English capital is invested in America in water and gas companies, cattle and horse breeding, breweries, flour mills, street railways, iron manufacturing and mining. In investments, other than government loans and railways, it is estimated that the enormous sum of £2,000,000,000 of England's money has been lent outside of the "tight little island."

After the First Quarrel.

"Go!" she exclaimed, "and never speak to me again!"

He passed out into the unsympathetic night, but paused when he reached the street, and drew something bright from one of his inside pockets. As he did so, the beautiful girl, who was watching him from the front door, uttered a shrill scream and ran towards him.

"Albert," she cried, "what would you do? Pray do not kill yourself! Throw your revolver away, and let us forget our quarrel."

"It isn't a revolver," he replied as he caught her in his arms. "It's a sixpenny spanner I borrowed from you that day my bicycle broke down. I have been wearing it next to my heart ever since."

Then they returned to the parlour and took up the thread of love's young dream where it had been broken.

How to Measure Distance.

IN various parts of the country they have a way of telling distances by "a stone's throw," "gunshot off," "so many minutes' journey," and the like; but down in Somersetshire they do it differently. A party of amateur pedestrians were "doing" the county, and as often happens with such travellers, had lost their way. It was near night, and they were at a loss what to do. Presently they met a small boy driving a cow.

"Can you tell us how far it is to Burton?" one of the party asked.

The boy looked to the right and left as though seeking information from the hilly country.

"Well, I s'pose hit's 'bout two whoops," he said at length.

"Two what?"

The boy seemed to take this as challenging his veracity, for he once more looked questioningly at the hills.

"P'raps hit may be er bit furder," he admitted reflectively, "but I shouldn't think hit's more'n two whoops an' a holler."

The Dangers of Dirty Finger Nails.

IN addition to their offensive appearance, dirty finger nails are, it seems, a source of positive danger. A number of experiments have been made at the Bacteriological Institute of Vienna on dirt taken from finger nails, and seventy-eight examinations have resulted similarly in nearly every case.

The method pursued was to put the dirt taken from finger nails in "cultivating media," such as are used for supplying germs with food on which to develop. The crop that grew from the germs in the dirt was a varied one, and included among others thirty-six kinds of micrococci and eighteen of bacilli.

In some parts of the country a scratch from a nail is regarded as poisonous, and there are many well-established instances of serious wounds having been occasioned in this way. It, however, is not the nail, but the dirt in the nail which does the mischief.

The obvious inference of the results of the experiments made in Vienna is that dirty nails should be avoided, and that no wound or cut or even a scratch should ever be touched by fingers with dirty nails, as there is no knowing what poison may be lurking there.

"WHAT'S worrying you, Harry dear?"
"I'm afraid I'm not worthy of you, sweetheart."
"Oh, well, keep on worrying."

CONTENT.—"It's wonderful that you should have survived the loss of your yellow jacket so often," remarked the Chinese courtier.

"Oh," replied Li Hung Chang airily. "I don't care anything about that yellow jacket so long as they leave me my red tape."

APPRECIATING IT.—Teasing Friend: "What makes that new baby at your house cry so much, Tommy?"

Tommy (indignantly): "It don't cry so very much; and, anyhow, if all your teeth were out, and your hair off, and your legs so weak you couldn't stand on them, I fancy you'd feel like crying yourself!"

MONKS WHO MAKE FARMING PAY.

ALL ABOUT THE FAMOUS TRAPPISTS OF CANADA.

"UNDOUBTEDLY the most successful farmers in Canada are the Trappist monks," writes a *P.W.* correspondent. "At Tracadie, in the east; at Oka, in Quebec; and at St. Norbet, on the Red river, in the west, they have changed unpromising tracks of land into fertile farms, and by their steady perseverance and their elevating example they are proving the saviours of some parts of our vast colonial territory.

"To the latest of their settlements—that of St. Norbet—I paid a visit recently during a brief holiday trip out west. This great farm in an object lesson that would show to the dullest capacity what perseverance and industry can do with the vast regions of untilled and semi-tilled loam lands out there, and it will prove of great benefit, even when told in print, to those who are intending to emigrate to the rich land of the north-west.

"Three years ago, I learnt, a little band of Trappist brothers came out to Canada from France, and built a monastery on a farm of 1,500 acres that had been presented to them by a priest named Richot, who had been taking a leading part in the efforts that had been made for years to settle our great Canadian west. Immediately upon their arrival they set to work on the ground. They cleared it of its scrub, laid out a garden, and began what is called 'breaking.' What progress has been made since then can best be judged from the fact that this year they have harvested 12,000 bushels of grain. Their garden is a sight worth seeing, with the marvellous abundance and variety of vegetables, enough, apparently, to support a good-sized town.

"For cattle and for horses they have put up stables of the most modern type. They have a creamery, a henery, with hundreds of fowls, a piggery of what is said to be the 'proper kind,' and they are now building a large granary. When I arrived the Father Superior, who is a French gentleman of distinguished family, was working in the garden. He saluted us politely, and told us to make ourselves at home. We were afterwards told that he is the humblest and most hard-working of the brethren.

"It is well known that the rules of the order of La Trappe are of the strictest kind. They are, however, somewhat modified in Canada. There the daily life of a clerical member of the order is regulated as follows: Six hours, from 8.30 p.m. to 2.30 a.m., for sleep; six hours for devotions; six hours for manual labour; and six hours for the reading-room and for private work. The lay members of the order give from eight to ten hours to manual work. No Trappist, clerical or lay, is permitted to eat flesh or fish food. All are strict vegetarians; Yet they appear to be physically strong, clear-eyed, and clean-limbed.

"There are fifteen members in the monastery at present—twelve French and three Canadians. The work of the whole establishment is done with military precision, without the slightest appearance of stiffness or restraint. There is implicit obedience, but, as it is based on religion, it has the appearance of freedom. They sleep on plank beds in narrow cells, and never speak to visitors, nor, for that matter, to each other. The Father Superior and the Guest Master do what talking there is to be done. Their conversation is confined to a salutation, which they exchange when passing each other, and which is, '*Mon frère, il faut mourir!*' ('Brother, we must die!')"

Strong Men in Pictures.

"I COULD tell you a tale about 'strong men photography.' Some of the minor limbs of the fraternity depend on the cunning of the camera for advertisement."

So said a photographer to *P. W.*

"One fellow, who visits country fairs and casual shows, goes through tricks of a kind wonderful to the unscientific mind. They are merely tricks after all, and his strength is a catch! He depends on his photos for advertisement. In posing, he folds his arms tightly, dilates the muscles of his neck, and lines his veins with Prussian blue. His picture gives you Hercules in his power of majesty; in private he is a well-developed man, without any swagger of sinew or strength.

"Professional strong men are as clever at make-up as a Society actress. The latter lavishes attention on face and neck; while breast and ribs, muscles and throat, occupy the former for hours ere the camera confronts them. A few lines about the body add pounds to the weight of a strong man (in the picture), a studied pose imparts additional formidability.

"The veins of a certain professional Hercules protrude like whipcord in the photographic cabinet. He dusts them with powdered ultramarine, and treats the high parts of the muscles with Indian red; otherwise his picture would appear quite ordinary.

"A strong woman, who comes here frequently, is a marvel of paint and stippling. She occupies her dressing-room for hours ere she faces the camera."

"Sandy Carmichael," a story by Cutcliffe Hyne, author of "The Adventures of Captain Kettle," begins in next week's SHORT STORIES.

POPPING THE QUESTION IN 1998.

A Century hence Girls will be Proposed to on Airships and Married on Housetops.

We are living in a progressive age, leaving behind us all traces of old-fashioned ideas, methods, and manners, and adopting those which fifty years ago would have black-inked the fair fame of those of our grand-parents who should have had the courage or the daring to say or do or think what we in our own times believe as right and proper and up-to-date.

Yesterday was sleepy, to-day we are awaking, to-morrow we shall be up and doing, racing along the path of life at a breakneck speed. We know by hearsay what took place yesterday, what was said, done, and thought; we know by practical experience what is going on to-day; but to-morrow?

Stand at the bar of modern progression and try to peer into the distant future, the future of a hundred years hence. Imagine, if you can, that far-off time to be painted on a gliding canvas, an association of ideas pictorially representing our descendants living in an age that will be considerably more advanced than our own is to-day—the to-morrow of a hundred years hence.

How will your great-great-great-grand-children make love, do you think? It is a problem which is full of interest, one which does not lack the elements of enthusiasm, nor invite the essentials of impossibilities.

Last January there appeared on this page an article entitled, "What London Will Look Like in 1998," in which we showed what our descendants a century hence would probably be doing in matters principally economic, and how differently from us they would be acting in all things.

Now, the advanced pessimistic person cannot but admit that in the current question of love, courtship, and marriage the doctrine at present laid down and

A proposal in an airship.

observed by most people as being the proper doctrine to observe in such matters will, a hundred years hence, have undergone a remarkable change. All the observances—save the essential radical element—all the preliminaries, all the details, such as you and I know to-day, will then have been put through a sieve, as it were—a process which will convert that which now stands with us as good into a something else, a form which will entirely change all the phases of the popular subject. But, as I have said, the essential radical element, the form of popping the question by the man, will remain.

Take the first great department of matrimony—love. Nowadays, at least it is so among the middle and the lower middle classes, love stands as the eminent ruler of the bulk of marriages. A couple meet, fall in love, walk out, become engaged, and marry. From the time of their first meeting to their wedding day, it may be six months or six years; but the average engagement time is about one year. A great deal of time is wasted in that year, we must speak plainly. Each understands the other's feelings, but modern convention insists that the man shall spend, or ought to spend, at least two evenings a week and the best part of Saturday and Sunday with his sweetheart. Fifteen hours a week will thus be devoted to repeated declarations of eternal fidelity, divided as follows: six hours on the two evenings, four on Saturday, and five on Sunday.

All this is very nice, but do you think such a waste of time will be tolerated by our descendants a hundred years hence? We think not. Those will be the days of quick action, when business people will travel to and from their offices and places of business in aërial ships; when at the corners of the streets telephones will be fixed for the greater convenience of the public; when steam power will have become practically extinct; when coals, candles, and gas will have become relics of the past; and when ink-written and even type-written letters will have gone out of date most likely, for there won't be time to do anything like this.

The condensation of everything will be the outlook of the future age.

At a low estimation it takes us 770 hours, or 32 days, to declare our love.

Imagine the people a century hence allowing such waste of time, particularly when it is a foregone conclusion that engaged couples will one day become man and wife.

Think of the countless love-missives that now pass between lovers during a year; of course, there are some couples whose sinning in this direction is but venial, but, on the other hand, those who do write, and those who have a penchant for writing, devote considerable time to the inditing of love-letters, some more than others.

These opportunities will hardly occur a hundred years hence. An odd letter or two may be exchanged between lovers, but the whole proceeding from the first meeting to the marriage ceremony will be conducted on swift lines in accordance with the spirit of the age. This is how the courtship will probably begin. They will be seated in the aërial ship on the way to the City:

"Allow me, Miss Binden. There's my card. I should like to know you. I see you are not engaged, and if I come up to your expectations of what an ideal husband should be, pray do me the honour of taking my name."

"I shall be charmed, Mr. Rylett, but this is rather sudden."

"Pray, Miss Binden, don't say that. It was said by your sleepy ancestors a century ago. Say, will you have me?"

"If my parents——"

"Ah, there, I don't want to marry your parents. A hundred years ago girls used to refer their lovers to their parents, but in the present age there isn't time for that, for what does it matter what anybody says when you and I consent and agree to lay the cloth upon the table of our understanding? All the same, I shall be pleased to know your parents, and hope you'll introduce me. I shall call on them and on you this evening at ten. I don't leave the office till nine. You know me by sight; I know you by sight. In less than a couple of hours we can each ascertain what the other is, has been, and is likely to be. My card tells you what I am. I've been with my firm since I left school, ten years ago. My income is derived from shares in the business, a system which is universally adopted among the representative business houses of the country, for you know it is in the power of the employés to make a firm, so it is only right that they should participate in the profits. I have more than sufficient for a start on the domestic tramp. Well, what do you say, Miss Binden?"

"I am quite agreeable. My name is Beatrice."

"Trix for short, eh? My name is Frank. A fortnight ought to do it all in, I suppose."

"Less. I can ring up the tradesmen. No waste of time going a-shopping."

"Good. Ecclesiastical or civil ceremony? Both are quite proper, you know."

"I don't mind. I suppose it is a matter of taste?"

"Purely. A century ago you couldn't get married in church, except by license, under three weeks, because it took three Sundays to advertise the fact that certain parties were to be married. Sensitive people didn't like that, and those who could not afford to pay the special license fee got married privately at the civil office. Nowadays, the old-timed publication of the banns, as it was called, is done away with, and we can get married by giving twenty-four hours' notice. I get off here. Well, I'll see you this evening. *Au revoir!*"

The air-ship alights at its City station, and Frank disembarks. Beatrice goes a station further. She tells her employer, however, that she is going to be married, so she returns home again with the congratulations of her business *confrères*.

The foregoing is the kernel of the love-nut which lovers will crack a century hence.

Now as regards the marriage ceremony itself. A modern wedding is usually a spectacle in which, as a matter of right, the bride is the central figure. The bride is the ceremony, and the ceremony is the bride.

A century hence there will be no showy pageant, no spectacular effect, no carriages and horses, no wedding presents, no excitement. A century hence, in harmony with the spirit of the day, there will be the bride and groom, a few witnesses and relatives; that's all. To-day is an age of sentiment; the to-morrow of a hundred years hence will be an age of stern fact, and the practical people who will be living then will taboo the pleasure of the eye for the gratification of the heart—that is to say, they will only please the heart, and the marriage ceremony will be simplicity itself.

There will be the choice of one of three places to get married in—the church (without choral service, or guests, or decorations), the civil office, or the house of the bride or groom. The majority of marriages will probably be conducted in the home of the bride—this practice is starting with us even to-day. The hour will be fixed late in the afternoon and the reception—such as it will be—may be held by the happy pair in their new home. Those of the leisured classes will perhaps go away, but business people will settle down at once.

NEW SERIES.

READ THE CONDITIONS.

TEN £25 NOTES OFFERED EVERY WEEK—TOTAL, £250.

PERHAPS THERE IS ONE FOR YOU.

Every week the Editor of PEARSON'S WEEKLY addresses Ten Envelopes to Ten People in various parts of the Country. Inside each envelope he places a £25 Note, and locks them away in his private safe. All you have to do is to apply to this office by letter, inclosing threepence in stamps, asking if one of these £25 Notes has been addressed to you, giving your full name and address clearly written in ink. The names have been picked out at random from Directories and other sources, so it is just possible notes have been awarded to people who are not readers of this paper. No note will be given unless it is applied for, so it would be advisable for you to tell your friends to apply also, whether they are readers or not.

All applications for No. 20 Distribution must reach us by Saturday, December 17th, addressed to THE "NOTE" EDITOR, 20, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

In Short Stories this week will be found the names of those who have received £1 each and of those who would have received £1 had they applied. Are you one of the latter?

RESULT OF DISTRIBUTION No. 17.

Two of the £5 notes offered this week have been applied for by:

J. H. THOMAS,
Lon Las, Llansamlet,
Swansea.

J. H. LANE,
Florence Cottages,
3 Ann's Hill Road,
Gosport.

An extra ten notes were addressed to members of the Brown family, and one has been captured by:

GEORGE BROWN,
4 East Adam Street,
Edinburgh.

The following people are each £5 poorer by not asking for it:

Chas. Cox, 38 Bow Lane, E.C.
Geo. Clarkson, Sherburn, York.
Jos. East, 43 Queen's Road, Dalston, N.E.
M. Foster, 1 Simpson's Lane, Irishtown, Dublin.
A. Manning, Annexe (Staff), County Asylum, Rainhill.
Mrs. Owen, The Laurels, New Street, Wem, Shrewsbury.
W. Rice, Gilwell Street, Plymouth.
H. Rankin, Dunlop, Kilmarnock.
Robert Brown, 33 Reform Street, Dundee.
Mrs. Brown, 2 Fair Hill Villas, Fair Hill, Cork.
Henry Brown, 309 Hoxton Street, N.
John Brown, Bargate, Richmond, Yorks.
Chas. Brown, 2 Park Place, Torquay.
Jos. Brown, Merthyr Dovan, Cardiff.
Chas. Brown, Linley, Broseley, Salop.
Fred Brown, 98 Havelock Road, Yarmouth.
Mrs. E. Brown, 10 Marine Terrace, Penzance.

TO SNAP-SHOTTERS AND OTHERS ALL OVER THE WORLD.

There are plenty of readers who, during the past summer, have been wandering about the country taking photographs of curiosities—natural and artificial. The editor of *P. W.* is in want of a number of these, and will pay a guinea each for the best five, which will become his property. If there are other photographs of sufficient interest to justify their publication, these will be paid for.

It must be clearly understood that curiosities in the way of the photographs themselves are not desired—that is to say, amateurish attempts which result in colossal feet or abnormally swelled heads are of no use. The interest must lie solely in *the object photographed, not in the photograph itself.*

The competition will remain open until the 1st of January, 1899, when another offer will probably be made, so that readers in all parts of the world should send along attempts, for if these arrive after the closing of the first competition, they will be included in the next. Mark your envelope or packet "Photo" in the top left hand corner.

A description giving, where possible, full names of persons and places dealt with, should accompany each photograph.

"The Stage as a Career for Girls" is exhaustively discussed in this week's HOME NOTES.

MEMORISING 2,000,000 TITLES.

THIS IS WHAT YOU WOULD HAVE TO DO IF YOU WANTED TO GET CERTAIN BOOKS AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM; FOR ONLY A SIXTH ARE INDEXED.

JUST now the atmosphere of the reading-room at the British Museum is highly charged. Said an aggrieved frequenter to *P.W.*:

"In a library which contains close on two million books catalogues, of course, are necessary. Although there are over three thousand of these, the want of a comprehensive subject index is deeply felt."

"Supposing some stranger, or even an ordinary reader, wants to write an article or a work—say on jewellery, or folk-lore, or religion—can he obtain the books dealing with these subjects?"

"If he knows the names of the works and the authors nothing is easier. A catalogue called the 'English' gives the titles of books, and in the general catalogue, from A to Z, he may easily find the names not of all the people who have written books—although the Museum spends £50,000 a year in the purchase of old and rare works—but still sufficient probably for his purpose.

"But unless he knows the titles of the books which have been written on the subject he is dealing with, or the writers' names, he is stranded. It is true there is a small subject index in existence.

"Some years ago Mr. Fortescue, who was then superintendent of the reading-room, essayed the gigantic task of classifying the library.

"He published three volumes of a subject-index catalogue, but, although his catalogues not only gave under the subject heading the titles of works and the names of authors, but the reference numbers—that is, the press marks of the work as well—the work, as most of it was performed in his spare hours, was of course very incomplete.

"To deal with a library of two million books, and which is increasing at the rate of 40,000 a year requires the efforts of a staff, and not of a single man."

"Do the authorities now oppose the idea of a subject index?"

"Yes, they say that as the position of books on the shelves is constantly being shifted, the reference number in the subject-index would have to be altered every time the abiding place of a book was changed, otherwise the subject-index would soon be unreliable.

"But this is absurd. It would surely not be a very difficult matter to make the press mark of the index tally with the book shelves, or, if this was found impracticable, to omit the press marks from the subject-index. The fact is, that when Mr. Fortescue was promoted to some other department, the subject-index collapsed, and readers like myself, who saw in this index a chance of emancipating ourselves from the clutches of the 'devils,' as we call them, are now sinking back into our old captivity.

"Devils are readers who for a small sum will find you such books and information as you require for a monetary consideration. There are devils in this room who have made such a study of the catalogues that they will quickly provide you with fifty works on a subject. Considering that the names catalogued under the name of Smith run into nine thick volumes, that the music catalogues alone number 265 volumes with the addition of a volume of 600 pages every other year, you can form some idea of their capabilities. I admit that the devils are an extremely clever lot, but they want paying, and as the library is free I contend that I ought to be able to get what I require without payment. There's one of the best of the tribe over there. Go and talk to him."

This *P.W.* did, and found the devil in question, although slightly unhealthy in appearance, to be an extremely amiable and intelligent individual.

"Of course, an exhaustive subject index would be a splendid thing," he said, "but as it would practically annihilate our calling I am glad it has been discontinued. Of course, some of the readers grumble, indeed, I have actually heard them accuse the staff of being lazy. Why, the officials here are the most industrious in the world. Just consider:

"The first printed catalogue bears the date 1787, and was in two volumes. The second, published in 1819, occupied seven octavo volumes. Then the staff woke up and in 1850 placed in the reading-room 150 volumes of the M.S. catalogue, and when in 1881 the Treasury agreed to grant £3,000 a year the officials began the gigantic general catalogue.

"As it was in writing, and threatened to swell into something like 9,000 volumes, it was decided a few years ago to print it. The cost of each printed volume of the general index is £100, I am told, and when the work is finished at the end of the century, the volumes will be reduced to 600 in number."

"I hear there are 3,000 catalogues already," said *P.W.*; "surely these ought to include every possible subject?"

"One would think so, but they don't. I have a private catalogue of my own, giving the press marks of over a thousand very curious works, not one of which is to be found in the existing catalogues, except the general, which is useless, of course, unless you know the author's name."

STORIES OF THE ROAD.

Commercial Travellers Spin Some Good Yarns.

His Concern.

A COMMERCIAL on his first trip called upon a well-known chemist. He was nervous as he put his hand in his pocket and handed out a card.

"I represent that concern," said the young man.

"You are fortunate," replied the chemist.

The commercial was encouraged, and said:

"I think so, sir. And the chemist who trades with us is even more so. My firm has the finest line of cosmetics in the country."

"I shouldn't have thought it," slowly responded the man of medicines. "Her complexion looks natural."

And he handed back the photograph which the young man had given him by mistake. He took it and left without waiting to make any farewell remarks.

A Little Deal in Ships.

A SOLITARY passenger is seated in a compartment of a North Eastern express. To him enter at a certain junction various knights of the road. Conversation, as usual, turns on "shop." One has done £100 that day, another £1,000, the climax being reached at £1,500.

The "big-figure" man turns to the silent passenger in the corner.

"You look solemn, my friend. Business bad?"

"Well, I have booked only one order to-day." But commiseration is turned to something else when he adds, "But that was for half a million," at the same time handing his card with a smile to the inquirer.

The quiet individual was the late Dr. Mitchell, of Armstrong and Co., Newcastle, whose firm had that day secured the contract for a Japanese warship.

Commercial Enterprise.

A LARGE firm that had been in business a good number of years could not, try how they would, obtain an order from one particular firm in the town; so they told a new traveller of theirs that if he could get an order they would raise his salary.

The young fellow went round and saw the manager and asked him if he could give him an order for his firm.

The manager looked through his samples and said: "Yes, you may walk out."

The fellow, not to be beaten, went round to another of their entrances, and who should he meet but the gentleman he had just left. The traveller said to him:

"I have just executed a splendid order from you not a minute ago. Can I ask for another?"

The manager was so struck with the fellow's wit and cheek that he gave him an order, and he departed.

One Tramp, as per Invoice.

THE most eventful day of my commercial life occurred last winter. I had just finished my last call of a long country journey with the gig, and had ten miles of lonely roads to travel on a pitch dark night.

Calling at the inn for a light refresher, what was my surprise to see a rough-looking fellow whom I had noticed when receiving money at my last stopping place. However, I thought no more of it until I had gone about two miles towards home, when a man sprang out from the side of the road, and made a dash for the horse's head.

I stunned him with a blow from a heavy cane I always carry, lifted him into the trap, and galloped my horse to the nearest police station, and was not much surprised when I found it was the man I suspected at the inn. He is doing time now.

"Us Coms."

AN old lady who resided near Darlington used to collect orange-peel, which she took to the marmalade factories for sale. Being accustomed to take her supply once a month she set off very early to the station with her peel in two large baskets.

She had got comfortably seated in a compartment when I entered. I said to her:

"Are you aware that this is a smoking compartment, madam?"

"Ay, sir," replied the old lady; upon which I drew out a cigar and puffed away, thinking my fellow passenger would change her carriage at the next station. Imagine my surprise when the old lady produced a short clay pipe and lighted it, and, before putting it in her mouth, she remarked: "Aye, but us commercials does like our bacca!"

Could Have Gone in Style.

A COMMERCIAL, travelling in the South of Ireland last May, was very anxious to see the Derby, so he crowded a week's work into Monday and Tuesday, and left Waterford by the Tuesday night's boat, giving one shilling to the "boots" to post his Wednesday's and Thursday's letters on the respective days.

"Boots" mixed them up, and, in mistake, posted the Thursday's letter on Wednesday night, and Wednesday's on the Thursday night, so that there was a sad anachronism at headquarters.

When the traveller returned to the office at the end of his trip, his shrewd employer, who had put "two and two together," saluted him with:

"If you had only said you wanted to see the Derby I could have given you a grand stand ticket!"

THE CREAM OF THE CREAM.

LADY LOCH and Lady Lytton are twin-sisters, and resemble each other in disposition as well as in face and form, which is not the general rule.

MR. QUILLER-COUCH, the novelist, better known as "Q," says his name should be pronounced "Cooch." The name means "red," and indicates the colour of his hair.

THE Queen of Belgium is a born horsewoman, and delights in performing circus tricks with her pet horse. Her latest freak is to jump the animal over a table full of flowers and lighted candles. She has often jumped through flaming hoops.

YVETTE GUILBERT began to earn her living as a dressmaker's apprentice. Her mother was an embroideress of note, but intended her daughter to be a dressmaker, because she thought the girl showed more aptitude for that work.

THE "Rothschild of Asia" is Aaron Ben Khansof, of Bokhara, who is generally conceded to be the wealthiest man in the Transcaspian possessions of Russia. He is a dealer in silver wares, doing a very large import and export business, and is about to establish a branch at Hamburg.

THE ancestry of the Duke of Fife is a disputed point. The Duke himself claims to be descended from the old Thanes of Fife, who bore the name of Macduff, and played an important part in the history of Scotland; but others contend that his pedigree can be traced back for two hundred years to a small farmer of no importance.

EMILE ZOLA had an attack of brain fever when a child, which is said to account to a great extent for his nervous condition. It gives him positive pain to write his novels, and he lives in constant dread that the particular one upon which he happens to be engaged will not find favour with the public. He considers it a duty to write.

THE young Duchess of Marlborough, despite her wealth, knows the value of money better than any Society woman in the country. She understands the keeping of accounts, and keeps a strict watch on household expenditure, devoting a certain portion of every morning to that duty. This must not lead to the supposition that she is mean; on the contrary, she is a generous woman.

MR. JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, the American millionaire, gives away large sums to benevolent and other institutions. He was once addressing an assembly in Chicago and referred to the money he had given to the University. "It is but the beginning——" he said, and the audience applauded frantically. "——and you will finish the work," he concluded. The applause stopped suddenly.

THE Tsar transacts a large amount of State business in the evening, sometimes giving audiences to councillors and ministers up till midnight. The Tsaritsa is generally in his room, but her husband insists upon her remaining during an interview with a State official. His Imperial consort invariably rises to leave the apartment as soon as a minister is announced, but Nicholas is not easy until she has resumed her seat and her work.

MR. CECIL RHODES has a keen appreciation of the value of money. Shortly before the disastrous expedition to Khartoum, Gordon made the acquaintance of Rhodes, and, among other things, told him that he had been offered a roomful of treasure by the Chinese, which he had refused. Mr. Rhodes promptly said that he would have kept it, had the offer been made to him. "You can't carry out big ideas without money," he remarked.

THE Shah of Persia has lost some of his crown jewels estimated to be worth one million sterling. They have disappeared from the Treasury at Teheran. Among the missing gems is the matchless ruby of Akbar, which belonged to the Grand Mogul of Delhi and was carried off by the Persian monarch Nadia Shah when he invaded India in the last century. The ruby was worn by the late Shah during his European tour. The theft is supposed to have been committed during the troubles following the accession of the present ruler of Iran.

MONSIEUR JULES CAMBON, the French Ambassador at Washington, whose name came prominently before the public in the peace negotiations between America and Spain, received his first real start up the ladder of promotion through the seizure of his cow. It was in the latter part of the reign of Napoleon III. M. Cambon had always been a Republican, and edited a Paris paper. Napoleon levied a tax, which the Republicans resented, and M. Cambon stigmatised it as illegal. When the collector came to him, the future Ambassador refused to pay, and hid such few valuables as he possessed. But he kept a cow, which he couldn't hide, and the officials seized and sold it to cover the tax. The Republicans made a great fuss about it and M. Cambon became a popular hero. A subscription was raised and another cow purchased for him. When the Empire fell, M. Cambon had his opportunity; he was still popular, owing to the seizure of the cow, and he obtained advancement at the hands of the new rulers.

"Cold Steel" is the title of a new serial story which will begin in the Christmas Number of "P.W." It is by Mr. M. P. Shiel, author of the now famous "Yellow Danger."

HOW PEOPLE PAIR.

By J. HOLT SCHOOLING.

THE marriage registers all over the country (England and Wales), which are periodically sent up to Somerset House, supply some interesting information about the pairing of the sexes in matrimony.

The most recent information on this score is set out in the diagram below, which shows plainly at a glance how, on the average, every thousand marriages are made up.

The great popularity of marriages between bachelors and spinsters stands out very clearly; and, as regards spinsters, they are concerned as brides in ninety-three marriages out of every hundred marriages; widows act as brides in the remaining seven marriages per hundred marriages.

Bachelors are bridegrooms in eighty-nine to ninety marriages per hundred marriages, and widowers are bridegrooms in the other ten to eleven marriages which complete the hundred.

Briefly, then, spinsters are in greater demand than bachelors, and widowers are in greater demand than widows.

Ignoring the ages of the bridegrooms, I may say that:

Bachelors	prefer	Spinsters	aged	21—24.
Bachelors	,,	Widows	,,	30—34.
Widowers	,,	Spinsters	,,	25—29.
Widowers	,,	Widows	,,	40—44.

Those four facts are very definitely shown by the registers, and they may be noted with advantage by spinsters and by widows.

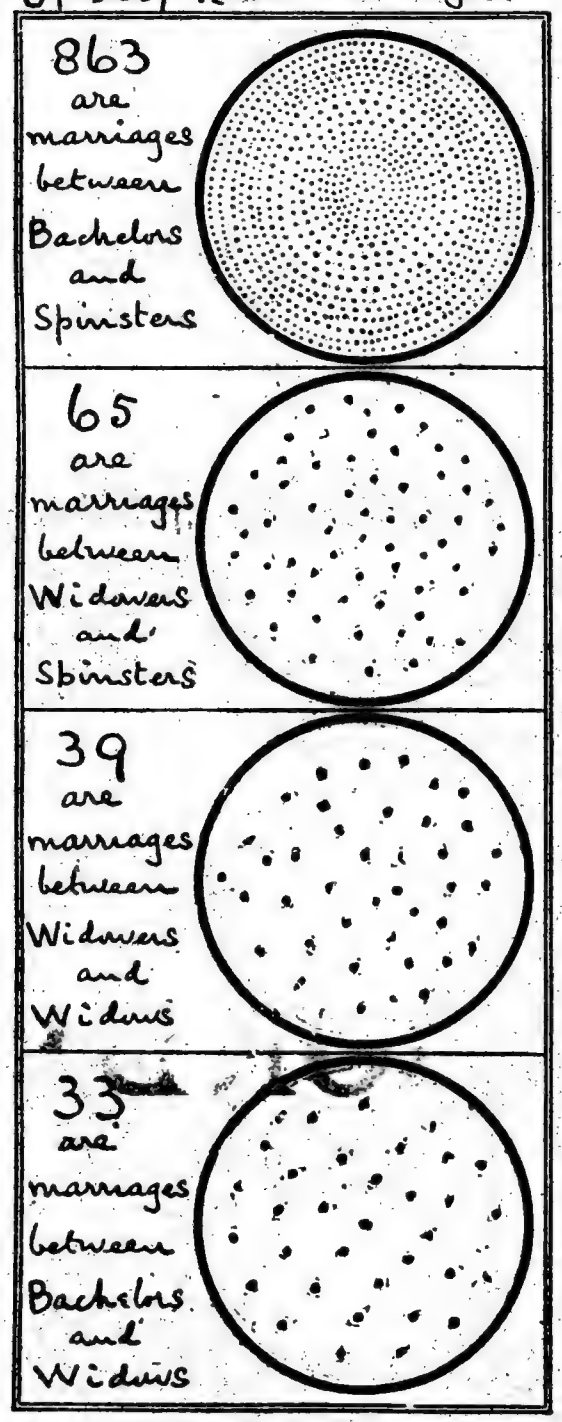
Putting the facts *vice versâ*, and ignoring the ages of the brides:

Spinsters	prefer	Bachelors	aged	21—24.
Spinsters	,,	Widowers	,,	35—39.
Widows	,,	Bachelors	,,	25—29.
Widows	,,	Widowers	,,	45—49.

These four facts are stated for the benefit of bachelors and of widowers, but I may say that both the spinsters and the widows show a less definite choice in this matter of age of the bridegroom than is shown by bachelors and by widowers as regards the age of the bride—a kindly act on the part of spinsters and widows.

(*Copyright*, 1898, *by John Holt Schooling.*)

Of every 1000 marriages:—



Is Your Name Here?

A CONTRIBUTOR has been amusing himself by trying to answer the question, or series of questions: What man in the history of the world whose name began with A—and after that every other letter of the alphabet in order—exerted the greatest influence upon the thought and conduct of mankind?

Of course, there are some letters which are not very prolific in the names of great men; but we think most of our readers will be surprised to see how many of the most illustrious names in history are included, and how few are excluded.

In some cases the compiler seems to have selected names quite as much with a view to comprehending in the list men of many countries, as because the name given was that of the greatest man of his time. The list follows:

Aristotle, Bacon, Confucius, Darwin, Ezra, Franklin, Goethe, Homer, Isaiah, Justinian, Kant, Luther, Mohammed, Newton, Ossian, Plato, Quintillian, Rousseau, Shakespeare, Tasso, Uhland, Virgil, Washington, Xavier, Young, Zoroaster.

An Ex-Burglar on His Profession.

THE other day *P.W.* came across an ex-burglar, who has spent thirty-seven years of his life in gaol.

He confessed that he had six years of drinking and carousing against these thirty-seven years of hard labour and imprisonment. He added:

"I don't know that many get caught as often as I have, but I can assure you it is a great deal more gaol than jollification with us. In fact, very few do any good for themselves. I have known a few who have got together enough to start a public-house, but, as a rule, the money comes easy, and goes the same. The greatest number of those I have known in the burglar line have died in gaol."

Asked whether he worked single-handed or with "pals," he replied:

"Alone mostly. I have been served some dirty tricks by pals, so that I got to dispense with 'em. Twice I was dragged from my bed by the police, who had been set on my track by pals who had 'peached' on me."

Asked how he can work in a room with people sleeping in it, his answer was:

"Oh, that's easy enough. I take a piece of bright tin, which I hold so as to reflect the light from the window to any part of the room I want, and, should I hear a sound of turning or uneasiness on the part of the sleeper, I can, of course, noiselessly put out the light and remain quiet until they go to sleep again; but the sleeper rarely awakes, and if he does he is, as a rule, too careful of his skin to make any disturbance, as he does not know how many burglars there may be in the room, and what they may do if pushed. Myself and a pal once passed a man on the stairs, we being laden with all his silver, without his making any attempt to stop us."

"Is burgling such a safe and paying game as it used to be?"

"No. What with electric bells, wires, patent locks, and window-fasteners, burglar-proof safes, the telegraph, detectives, and so on, the difficulty of burgling a house is ever so much greater, and the risks of getting caught are much more numerous. No," he plaintively concluded, "burgling is not what it used to be."

"WE give baby all sorts of things to play with, but she won't stick to any of them."

"Did you ever try the gum-brush?"

MRS. WEDDCASH: "You know I made you what you are!"

Weddcash: "That's right, woman; gloat over your work."

JIMMY: "But what do you do when you get really sleepy? You don't own up to it, do you?"

Tommy: "No. I begin asking pa silly questions, and he makes me go to bed."

"DAWSON's an awfully extravagant chap."

"Yes, he is."

"Has he got much money behind him?"

"I'm afraid more than he has before him."

"I WOULD die a thousand deaths for you," said the villain in his most silken tones.

"I fear me much," said the heroine, whose love was growing cold, "that the piece will not run that long."

"PEARSON'S WEEKLY" INSURANCE COUPON.

The signing of this coupon by the purchaser will be sufficient to entitle his or her next-of-kin or legal representative to the benefits of the £1,000 Railway Insurance and the Football and Cycling Insurance, provided the conditions of the insurance coupon have been fulfilled.

Signature.....

Available from 5 p.m., Friday, Dec. 9th, 1898, until mid night, Saturday, Dec. 17th, 1898. For full particulars see below.

"Pearson's Weekly" Railway, Football, and Cycling Insurance.

474 INSURANCE CLAIMS HAVE BEEN PAID

(Including one of a Thousand Pounds.)

This Insurance holds good for any number of claims to the extent of **£1000**—not for one only.

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OCEAN ACCIDENT AND GUARANTEE CORPORATION LIMITED.

40, 42, and 44, MOORGATE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

(To whom Notice of Claims, under the following conditions, must be sent within seven days to the above address.)

INSURANCE TICKET, applicable to passenger trains in Great Britain and Ireland.

Issued under Section 33 of the Ocean Accident and Guarantee Company, Limited, Act, 1890.

ONE THOUSAND POUNDS

will be paid by the above Corporation to the legal representative of any person killed by an accident to the train in which the deceased was an ordinary ticket-bearing passenger (including holders of season and excursion tickets, and post-office officials in any of the railway sorting vans, and railway servants travelling with pass or railway servants' ticket in an ordinary carriage), and who, at the time of such accident, had in his, or her, possession, the Insurance Coupon above, or the paper in which it is, with his, or her, usual signature, written in ink or pencil on the space provided at the foot. This paper may be left at his, or her, place of abode, so long as the coupon is signed.

PROVIDED ALSO, that the said sum will be paid to the legal representatives of such person injured should death result from such accident within three calendar months thereafter, and that notice of the accident be given within three days of its occurrence.

One Hundred Pounds will be paid to whomsoever the Editor of *Pearson's Weekly* may decide to be Next-of-kin of any cyclist or football player who meets his death by an accident while actually riding a cycle or playing football, provided that deceased at the time of such accident, had in his, or her, possession, the Insurance Coupon to be found above, or the paper in which it is, with his, or her, usual signature, written in ink or pencil on the space provided at the foot, and that death occurred within twenty-four hours thereafter, and that notice was given of such accident to the said Corporation at above address, within three days of its occurrence.

The above conditions are the essence of the contract.

This Insurance holds good for the current week of issue only, and entitles the holder to the benefit of, and is subject to, the conditions of the "Ocean Accident and Guarantee Company, Limited, Act," 1890, Rules No. 2 and 3.

The Purchase of this publication is admitted to be the payment of a Premium under Sec. 34 of the Act. A Print of the Act can be seen at the office of this Journal, or of the said Corporation. No person can recover on more than one Coupon Ticket of this paper in respect of the same risk.

N.B.—Subscribers who have duly paid a twelve months' subscription for PEARSON'S WEEKLY in advance to their newsagent, or to the publisher, need not, during the period covered by their subscription, sign the coupon, or carry the paper on their person. It is only necessary to forward the newsagent's receipt to the publisher of the paper, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and a certificate will be sent in exchange.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the premium in respect of PEARSON'S WEEKLY £1,000 RAILWAY INSURANCE and also of the FOOTBALL and CYCLING INSURANCES, has been paid up to December 31st, 1898, and that therefore every purchaser of PEARSON'S WEEKLY is insured with this Company against Fatal Railway Accident to the extent of ONE THOUSAND POUNDS, and against Fatal Cycling and Football Accident, under the conditions named in the notice above.

General Manager for the Ocean Accident and Guarantee Corporation Ltd.

Neil S. Tavell

Read your Character in your Pencil.

Do you know that you can tell something of a man's character by his pencil? If you don't believe that, just look at the pencils of a few of your friends and you will be surprised at the revelations made by these bits of wood.

For instance, some men have a habit of sedulously chewing the end of their pencil—not because they are fond of wood, but because they are of a reflective nature and given to considering a question well before they act. For that reason they pause, pencil in hand, and nibble the end of it with apparent relish while they consider what they had better put down. The pencil with the end chewed off indicates excessive caution as a chief characteristic of its owner.

The bad-tempered man's pencil bears the imprint of his teeth on the sides. He derives a savage sort of satisfaction from bringing his teeth down on the yielding wood, and soon his pencil looks as if it had the small-pox.

There is a good deal, too, in the way a pencil is sharpened. The careless man whittles his as if he were cutting up a stick of wood. Appearances don't count in the slightest with him. The economical man sharpens his very evenly and nicely, with no waste of wood. The neat and careful man sharpens his with all the exactness of some mechanical device, and the man with artistic ideas shaves his to a long, tapering point.

Then there's another kind of fellow who sharpens his pencil at both ends. He's one of those unfortunate individuals who are always in a hurry, and who, by the way, never accomplish as much as the deliberate man. But you can't convince him of that, and so he has both ends ready for some imaginary emergency when he won't have a knife or else won't have the time to use it. And when he wants to write something in a hurry, ten to one he chews off one point and breaks the other.

There's another man who always has a stump. Somehow he never seems to start out with a full-grown pencil, but with a little end that leads you to imagine he buys his in job lots at some bargain sale. Strange to say, he is not the stingy man, but the good-natured chap. His friends always borrowed his pencil and never returned it, and so he took to carrying a stump in self-defence, for he found out they wouldn't want to use that.

But women—well, their pencils don't tell any story except that they are women. You can't depend upon a pencil to reveal any of the characteristics of its feminine owner. They all higgle haggle it as if they had cut it with an axe, and the funny part of it is you can't teach them how to sharpen one properly. That is a secret they cannot master. The new woman and all the learned female reformers do not sharpen a pencil any better than the most frivolous and giddy of the sex.

They all go about it the same way—as if it were a painful operation. Did you ever watch a pretty girl perform this very commonplace act? First she screws up her mouth and sets her teeth together with grim determination; her eyes have a deadly glitter in them, her brow is wrinkled. She clutches the pencil firmly, and, knife in hand, falls upon it as if she meant to completely demolish it.

She whittles the wood away with reckless zeal, and generally manages to break the lead two or three times. In the end she always cuts her finger. That is part of the performance. When she has finished, the pencil looks as if it had been nibbled by a lot of hungry mice. A strange thing about women—a problem for some of the philosophically inclined to solve—is, that they always get angry with the man who tries to show them how to sharpen a pencil properly.

RESULT OF THE INSURANCE COMPETITION.

MR. T. ROBINSON, of 147 Church Lane, Smethurst, is the winner of the first prize offered in this competition, and has had the solid silver pencil-case forwarded to him. A copy of "Van Wagener's Ways," by Mr. W. L. Alden, has been sent to each of the following:

M. Adams, 25 Arbour View, Winchester; Miss K. M. Goulden, 4 Church Street, Folkestone; W. H. Hackett, 3 Bridge Street, Kingston; F. Cromar, 911 Waldegrave Road, Brighton; C. A. Russell, 2 York Buildings, Edinburgh; H. F. Tucker, 23 Herbert Road, Stockwell; T. W. Rose, 56 Radcliffe Road, Southampton; C. Wilson, Insurance Superintendent, Chalvey Vale, Slough; E. H. Porter, 12 Annfield Street, Dundee; J. M. Kilford, 38 Queen Street, Portsea; C. J. Wulcko, 5 Lathom Road, East Ham; J. D. Mellows, 7 Balfour Road, Nottingham; L. Caselton, 15 King George Street, Greenwich, S.E.; H. A. Allain, South Esplanade, Guernsey; Thos. Holmes, 29 Skipton Road, Silsden, Nr. Keighley; E. M. Eyre, 411 Amsinck Strasse, Hamburg, Germany; T. J. Bell, Sydney House, Hartington Street, Barrow-in-Furness; A. Reid, 4 Waterloo Place, Inverness, N.B.; W. H. Brooks, 14 Trenville Avenue, Spring Lane, Sparkhill, Birmingham; D. Wolseley Edgar, Diamond, Monaghan, Ireland; J. W. Darling, 25 Rosebank Cottages, Gardiner's Crescent, Edinburgh; J. W. Etherington, 20 Lark Terrace, Rochdale; A. G. Boyce, 78 Leswin Road, Stoke Newington, N.; F. Staines, 227 New North Road, Islington, N.; W. J. Ormiston, Cameronian Cottage, Brynhyford, Swansea.

Remembered Him.

"You needn't say a single word!" exclaimed the woman of the house, as soon as she had opened the door and glanced at the man standing outside. "I know you."

"But, ma'am——"

"I recognised you as soon as I saw you. You can't——"

"Ma'am——"

"You're the man who sold me a washing machine six months ago for twenty-five shillings that wasn't worth five. It wouldn't——"

"All I wanted to tell you, ma'am, is——"

"It wouldn't wash anything. The longer you used it the dirtier the clothes got. You couldn't sell me anything now if you was to pay me for taking it. When a man cheats me once he won't ever have the chance to do it again. I can tell you that. I'll sell that washing-machine back to you for half-a-crown. It doesn't make any difference what you've got this time. I wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole, and you can talk till you are grey. It won't do you any good."

"Madam," replied the man, who had been dancing about impatiently, "your kitchen roof is blazing. That's what I stopped to——"

"Goodness gracious, why didn't you say so? What did you want to stand there talking for when the house is burning up? Run over to the police-station and give the alarm! Fire! Fire!"

South America's Suicide Wind.

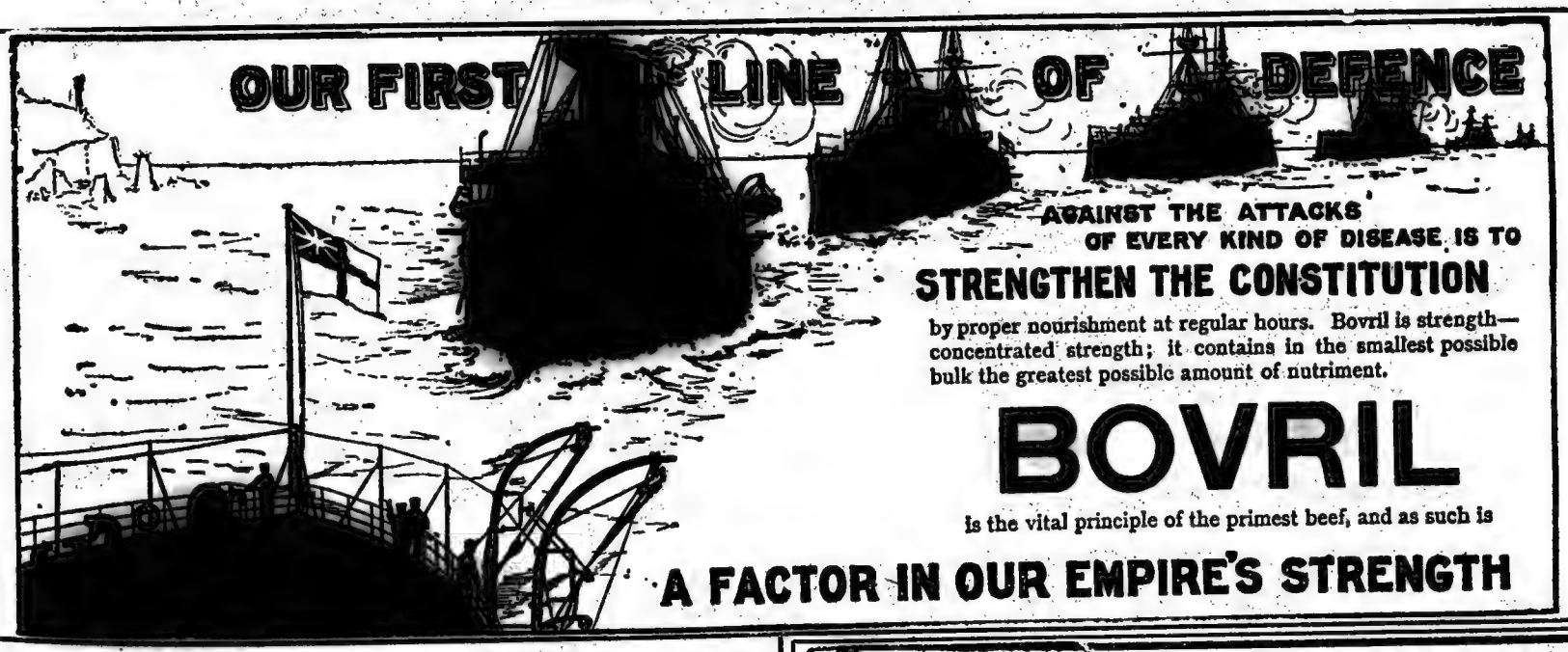
IN Brazil and other parts of South America the natives know and fear a certain condition of the air, which they call "suicide wind."

It is not a superstition, but an actual condition of the atmosphere which seems to drive the people to madness, and during its continuance self-inflicted deaths are numerous.

Criminologists and scientists all over the world are interested in this peculiar atmospheric influence, which is indicated by a soft, moist, warm air, that settles heavily on the earth.

The climatic condition known as the "suicide wind" is greatly dreaded in that part of the country.

Statistics prove that suicides and other crimes occur together or in waves as they are described.



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SERIAL STORY.

"The Rose of Judah."

A TALE OF THE CAPTIVITY.

By GEORGE GRIFFITH,

Author of "The Angel of the Revolution," "Valdar the Oft-Born," "Briton or Boer?" etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LOVE-MADNESS OF BELSHAZZAR.

More than a month had passed since the departure of Arsames from Babylon with the message of the Queen. Nitocris had at once ordered herself to be carried to Belshazzar when she recognised the supreme importance of avoiding his combat with Arioch, and as matters were just then in such a critical state in Babylon, even Belshazzar found himself unwillingly compelled to yield to the demands of the still powerful queen, whose guards, thanks to the generalship of Arioch, had already secured command of the gates and the chief arsenals of the city.

So Arsames departed on his fateful errand, and Nitocris went back to her palace to watch and to wait, chafing bitterly against the forced inaction, and longing to make the one bold and decisive stroke whose success would seat her on the throne of Semiramis, and whose failure would mean, not only death for herself, but ruin to all who supported her, and torture and death and shame to those whom, for Belzan's sake, she was still determined to protect and befriend as far as she could.

If the news which Arsames had brought had left no doubt of Belzan's death, she might perhaps have staked everything on the hazard of a stroke for the supreme power. But now there was still a hope that she might one day see that handsome face and splendid form of his again, and, though ever and anon she scoffed bitterly at this strange love of hers, even this hope was enough to cause her resolution to waver. She would not risk death while there was a chance of seeing him again, of placing Miriam's hand in his, and being happy herself in their happiness.

Belshazzar had assumed the royal authority with all the pomp and splendour that the great city could afford. For days the populace had been delighted by a succession of brilliant pageants, thousands of beasts had been sacrificed to the Gods, the smoke of countless offerings had ascended day and night from hundreds of altars. The hungry had been fed and the thirsty had drunk to their hearts' content at the expense of the royal bounty, and gifts and honours had been lavished upon Asshad and his priests.

Nanit had returned to the palace and, with the open support of the King, had challenged a trial before the Council of Judges on the charge of sedition and attempting to raise a riot. Arioch brought up his witnesses, but all that they said simply went to show that Nanit's harangue had been wholly in favour of the authority of the King, and against those who had used unholy arts to rob him of the fruits of his triumph. Scores of others had been brought up in his defence, the murder of the three Jewish merchants was made a very light matter now that the leader of the Hebrews was disgraced and in prison in company with all the most powerful men among the elders of the Captivity.

And so Nanit was triumphantly acquitted, and on the night that the trial ended, he sat at the King's own table clothed in a robe of honour.

Babylon seemed to have plunged into an orgie of wild and unthinking excess, and Belshazzar had sunk back again into his former slothful carelessness, thinking of nothing but self-indulgence, totally ignoring the reports which came day by day to the city of the vast hosts which Cyrus had collected after his first defeat and was leading against Babylon itself by way of the east and north.

What was this to him? Were not the walls of Babylon thick and its towers high? The country between the walls could feed the city for years, while Cyrus broke his strength against the ramparts of Nimitti-Bel and wore himself out repelling the constant attacks of the garrisons of the frontier towns in his rear.

The newly-crowned king was, in fact, infinitely more disturbed by the mysterious sickness of Miriam than he was by the peril of his empire. Day by day he had feasted his eyes upon her beauty as she lay helpless and half-unconscious in the magnificent chamber which he had set apart for her use in the Palace, until his love for her had become a wild infatuation, a species of insanity which made it impossible for him even to recognise his plain duties as king, much less to perform them.

Day after day he sat for hours by the purple-draped couch of ivory and gold on which she lay, watching her with adoring eyes, and a heart aching with anxiety lest this trance-like sleep should prove to be only the fore-runner of death. Every now and then she woke to a sort of half-consciousness, took a little food and drink from the hands of the physicians who constantly watched her, and then sank back again into the vacant sleep-like slumber.

He had made the most lavish promises to anyone, physician or priest or wonder-worker, who could restore her to consciousness and health. Many had tried and paid the penalty of failure with their lives, and so it had gone on, day after day and week after week. The lovely form had lain there on its splendid couch, breathing gently, sleeping quietly, careless and unknowing of all that was going on about it, and day by day the longing grew in Belshazzar's heart, and the madness that was stealing over his mind dulled faculty after faculty, until those about him began to whisper that ere long the fate of Nabonidus might be his.

Even Asshad had at length joined with Nitocris in her efforts to rouse him from this fatal lethargy. The reports of the new advance of Cyrus were coming in faster and faster. Message after message, each one more urgent than the other, came in from the frontier-towns which were one by one being cut off from communication with each other and the capital, until murmurs of revolt began to be heard even in the city itself.

As soon as the lavish festivities of the coronation ceased, the natural reaction came, together with a great and sudden rise in prices. Hebrews were murdered in the streets in open daylight, and the sacking of their houses and stores of merchandise became matters of almost nightly occurrence, and still Belshazzar sat by the white form of an unconscious girl lying on the purple coverings of a Queen's couch, careful and forgetful of everything else, the king lost in the lover and the ruler in the dreamer.

He gave the scantiest attention to affairs of state. His days were passed in watching Miriam, or hunting in his paradise, and his nights in eating and drinking with his parasites and boon companions, and all the while the wave of discontent rose higher in the city, and the hosts of Cyrus drew nearer and nearer.

At length Asshad became really anxious. With him, loyalty to the king was nothing; but the maintenance of the worship of the Assyrian gods and of his own position as chief of the Assyrian hierarchy was everything, and he knew that the first moment of the entry of Cyrus into Babylon would be the last moment of the worship of Bel and Nebo and Ishtar. He saw, too, that unless some means could be found of rousing the King to take action, there must either be a revolution in Babylon, which would be the same as opening the gates to the invader, or the easy triumph of Cyrus over a leaderless people.

If this Hebrew girl could only be roused, if she could only be restored to health so that Belshazzar might take her and make her either his Queen or his slave as he thought fit, his madness might quickly be over, and all might be well even yet. And, thus thinking, Asshad at last brought himself to urge the very course which at first he would most strenuously have resisted.

So one afternoon he went to the Old Palace and found the King seated, as usual, by Miriam's couch, gazing with fixed, hungry eyes at her unconscious loveliness.

"Well, Asshad, what is it?" said Belshazzar in a slow, weary voice. "Has another city fallen, or is a new miracle-worker so sure of restoring my beloved to life that he will sharpen the stake for himself—or is the army of Cyrus outside Nimitti-Bel, or what?"

The words were spoken with a listlessness that shocked even the High Priest. Belshazzar's black and once fiery eyes were dull and lifeless. Even his young and powerful frame was beginning to look shrunk and bent, and his voice sounded weak and wavering. The Master of Life and Death in Shinar seemed, in truth, to be dying, mind and body, of the longing of an unsatisfied love.

"Lord, it is none of these," replied Asshad, "and yet in a measure it is all of them."

"No riddles, Asshad," said Belshazzar, passing his hand wearily across his forehead. "Give me plain words or hold thy peace. What is it? Hast thou thyself in all these days of waiting and nights of watching at length found a means to bring this, my beloved, back to life? If thou hast, then speak. If not, go thy way and leave me, for I tell thee that until that is done there is no more life or kingship in me. With her at my side Babylon shall find me a king worthy to sit in the place of Sargon. For her I will work and think and fight and go forth and conquer Cyrus as I did before; but without her Babylon, Shinar, life itself, are worthless to me, like the day without the sun and the night without the stars. What is Babylon to me, without my soul's desire? If I cannot have that, let Cyrus come when he will. Now what is thy errand?"

This speech left no doubt upon the mind of Asshad that Belshazzar was fast succumbing to the madness which was possibly a legacy from his father, and this emboldened him to make a suggestion which a few weeks before would have driven the King to fury, and perhaps have insured his own disgrace and possibly death.

"My Lord," he replied in a low, sympathetic tone, "for many days and nights I have pondered this matter, and if I have not spoken before it was because I found no counsels worthy to lay before the King. But this morning, while watching the stars from the top of the Temple of the Great God, there came to me the thought for which I was seeking."

"Well, what is it?" said Belshazzar. "If it proves a wise one, a hundred altars shall smoke to-night in honour of the Gods; if not, the Priests' tenth shall this month be given in gifts of bread and meat and wine to the populace. Now speak."

"The thought was this, Lord," replied the High Priest, bowing low to hide the evil look that passed across his face. "The living death of the daughter of Mishael, like the evil that has befallen my Lord the King, is enchantment, and who shall remove that, save the enchanter himself? If I were in thy place, Lord, I would bring this Hebrew magician, whom his people call Daniel, out of his dungeon. I would set him here beside this maiden's couch, and I would say to him: Choose now between the undoing of the work of thy demon and the stake for thyself and slavery for thy people; for, as my Lord well knows," he went on with a sudden change of tone, "and as the wise Nanit said in the ears of the people, these people whose fathers' fathers were slaves, are now lord and masters of Babylon. They hold their heads high, and go with a stiff neck even into the presence of the King. So shall my Lord either obtain his heart's desire or allay the discontent of his loyal citizens by taking a vengeance on these usurers and robbers which has been too long deferred."

Belshazzar looked keenly at the Priest for a few moments and then said:

"I wonder whether the father of that thought, Asshad, is thy love for the King or thy hate for the Prophet of the Hebrews? Whether it is a god or a demon that he serves, it is a mighty spirit. Has not everything gone wrong in Babylon since this Belteshazzar was cast into prison? What might happen if he were killed and his people brought into slavery? Still, thy words are not without wisdom, and whatever befalls Babylon, *she* must be saved from this living-death. She must come back to life so that I may hold her, warm and living, in my arms. It is well! There is my signet. Take a guard, release Belteshazzar and bring him here instantly."

Asshad pressed the signet to his brow and left the room well pleased with the success of the errand, for he little believed that Daniel could succeed where he and the priests of the great Gods had failed, and he felt certain that, with Belshazzar in his present mood, he must either restore Miriam to health or die.

The dungeon in which Daniel had been confined was one of those in the foundations of the Old Palace, and Asshad made such haste upon his errand that it seemed to Belshazzar as though but a few moments had passed in the reverie to which he had again resigned himself before he heard the tramp of guards in the corridor outside and, looking up, saw Asshad enter with Daniel.

The prophet's appearance had changed sadly since Belshazzar had last beheld him. His turban, fastened with a costly jewel, was gone. So too were his rich robes and the long scarlet cloak which he wore in virtue of his office as Chief of the College of the Chaldeans. His hair and beard were matted and dusty and unkempt, a soiled linen tunic was his only garment; there were not even sandals on his feet, and his wrists and ankles bore the mark of fetters, and yet somehow, even to Belshazzar's distorted senses, it seemed that never had the Prophet of the Hebrews looked more majestic than now.

He and Asshad prostrated themselves, but when Daniel rose to his feet he looked gravely and even sternly at the King, and advanced towards him rather as a judge about to address a culprit than a prisoner in the presence of one whose lightest word could send him to instant death.

He did not even condescend to utter the usual formal greeting, nor did he wait for the King to speak first. Asshad marked this with savage satisfaction, and was already beginning to reckon up the fruits of his triumph over his rival for the supreme priestly power and his spoils of the victory over the hated Hebrews.

"Thou hast sent for me because thou and all thy priests and soothsayers have failed to restore her for whom thy soul longeth to life!" said Daniel, looking down upon Belshazzar as he crouched by the bed-side.

"And to tell thee, Belteshazzar," cried the King, springing angrily to his feet, "that if, within an hour, the daughter of Mishael does not rise from this couch fully restored to health and sense and strength, thy face shall be covered and thy stake sharpened, even though the demon whom thou servest and whose curse thou hast laid upon her and Babylon were tenfold greater and stronger then he is."

"Thy words are idle, Belshazzar, King of Babylon," said the Prophet in slow, grave tones. "Yea, they are not the words of a King, but rather of a petulant youth who is offered a great treasure and will not take it because one jewel in it is withheld. Behold, I am an old man and care little for a few more days or years of life, and moreover I know I cannot die till the Lord's appointed time. Thou hast called me here with threats and at the bidding or the instance of this priest of false gods, who cares nothing for thee or thy heart's desire, but much for the spoils of sacrifice to his Gods, wherefore these commands are not thine but his. I will not do them."

"What!" shouted Belshazzar. "What dost thou say, slave? Are these words that a crowned Lord of Asshur should hear in his own palace? Let his face be covered!"

"And in the same hour cover hers too!" said Daniel, taking a swift stride to the side of the bed and spreading his hands out over Miriam's face. "By the might of the Lord she sleeps. By the might of the Lord only will she wake. Now take thy choice, Belshazzar, and say whether she shall live or die!"

CHAPTER XXV.

PRIEST AND PROPHET.

Asshad and the Guards held their breath and stared at the strange picture before them. There in the midst the almost motionless form of Miriam, lying clad in white linen on the purple coverings of the couch, with the smooth, shining masses of her flame-coloured hair combed out and dressed three times every day by the most skilful tire-women in Babylon, spread out over her pillow and folded over her slowly moving breast like a mantle of living gold. On the one side Daniel, soiled, ragged and unkempt, and on the other the Lord of Asshur in his royal robes.

Belshazzar's eyes met Daniel's across the couch. He withstood his steady gaze for a moment and then dropped his eyes and murmured almost like a chidden schoolboy:

"I spoke in haste, Belteshazzar. Canst thou truly make her live?"

The Guards, who were already moving round to lay hands on Daniel in obedience to the King's commands, halted, wonder-stricken at hearing such words from a crowned despot of Asshur. Asshad bit his lips under his beard and longed to snatch a spear from the nearest soldier and drive it through Daniel's heart, for at his own heart there was knocking a deadly fear lest, after all, the servant of Jehovah should prove himself stronger than all the priesthood of Bel.

"Behold she lives, since she hath never died!" said Daniel. "Dost thou not see that her breast heaves with the breath of life? Hath she not eaten and drunk these many days? Hath this fair body of hers wasted? Have her tresses lost their lustre or her cheeks their fulness? It is but her soul that sleeps!"

"And canst thou awaken it?" whispered Belshazzar. "If thou canst, all the honour and the power that were thine shall be thine again—thine and thy people's. If not——"

"Who art thou, Belshazzar, that thou shouldst threaten one who has braved the anger of the Great King? Did I fall down and worship the Golden Image at his command? Did not the father of Miriam walk with the Son of God in the midst of the seven-times heated furnace and come forth

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"Montrose Lodge,
"Truro Road, Wood Green, N.,
"June 8th, 1898.

"Gentlemen,—I had a severe attack tonsilitis, and was just on the verge diphtheria. I could not walk for s, owing to the loss of strength. ng advised to take Scott's Emulsion, id so, and after three bottles I found had gained my lost strength and rgy, and now I am pleased to say I quite well again. I was very pleased h the taste of Scott's Emulsion, and nk it very palatable. I think your uable preparation cannot be too hly recommended.—Your very truly,

"(Signed) JAMES W. C. JATER."

Scott's Emulsion contains cod-liver oil, glycerine, and the hypophosphites of lime and soda, blended into a perfect and palatable emulsion that does not tax digestion. Cod-liver oil and glycerine are both specifics for affections of the throat and lungs, and the glycerine is also of great advantage because it assists in a quick absorption of the oil into the blood; hence, by making this combination, we not only soothe the inflamed membranes, but we also enrich the blood with properties which give strength and vitality to the whole system. The hypophosphites aid digestion, feed the nerves, and assist in the general building up of the body.

Scott's Emulsion is approved of highly by the medical profession, physicians declaring that it is the best form of cod-liver oil in the world. All chemists sell Scott's Emulsion.

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THE Manufacturers of "Eiffel Tower" Lemonade are making a most delicious Winter Drink. It is prepared by blending Ginger with the well-known "Eiffel Tower" Lemonade.

We advise everyone who has tried the "Eiffel Tower" Lemonade to be sure and try "Eiffel Tower" **Lemon-Ginger.** A 4½d. bottle makes nearly four pints of delicious non-intoxicating wine. It can also be diluted with hot water, and then makes a fine warm, comforting beverage for supper, &c.

NOTICE. Do not forget that "Eiffel Tower" Lemonade makes the best and cheapest Lemonade for Christmas parties.

NOTICE. Do you know that HOT Lemonade is a delicious drink. Try a glass of "Eiffel Tower" Lemonade made with hot water. The flavour is exquisite.

SEND 6D. Ask your Grocer for a 4½d. bottle of "Eiffel Tower" **Lemon-Ginger** or to G. FOSTER CLARK & Co., 27 Eiffel Tower Factory, Maidstone, when a bottle will be sent by return of post.

Never Fails.

Established 24 YEARS.

Have you a Cough?
A DOSE WILL RELIEVE IT.

Have you a Cold?
A DOSE AT BEDTIME WILL REMOVE IT.

Try it also for

Bronchitis, Asthma, Influenza, Whooping-Cough, Consumption.

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BE SURE YOU GET IT.

"I have used your Lung Tonic for some time and found it a most valuable remedy for colds, coughs, &c. A few weeks ago it quite cured a very severe cold. We gave it to our boy (two years old) with very beneficial results."—(Rev.) J. W. GRAYSON, Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks.

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"The Rose of Judah."

A TALE OF THE CAPTIVITY.

By GEORGE GRIFFITH,

Author of "The Angel of the Revolution," "Valdar the Oft-Born," "Briton or Boer?" etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LOVE-MADNESS OF BELSHAZZAR.

MORE than a month had passed since the departure of Arsames from Babylon with the message of the Queen. Nitocris had at once ordered herself to be carried to Belshazzar when she recognised the supreme importance of avoiding his combat with Arioch, and as matters were just then in such a critical state in Babylon, even Belshazzar found himself unwillingly compelled to yield to the demands of the still powerful queen, whose guards, thanks to the generalship of Arioch, had already secured command of the gates and the chief arsenals of the city.

So Arsames departed on his fateful errand, and Nitocris went back to her palace to watch and to wait, chafing bitterly against the forced inaction, and longing to make the one bold and decisive stroke whose success would seat her on the throne of Semiramis, and whose failure would mean, not only death for herself, but ruin to all who supported her, and torture and death and shame to those whom, for Belzan's sake, she was still determined to protect and befriend as far as she could.

If the news which Arsames had brought had left no doubt of Belzan's death, she might perhaps have staked everything on the hazard of a stroke for the supreme power. But now there was still a hope that she might one day see that handsome face and splendid form of his again, and, though ever and anon she scoffed bitterly at this strange love of hers, even this hope was enough to cause her resolution to waver. She would not risk death while there was a chance of seeing him again, of placing Miriam's hand in his, and being happy herself in their happiness.

Belshazzar had assumed the royal authority with all the pomp and splendour that the great city could afford. For days the populace had been delighted by a succession of brilliant pageants, thousands of beasts had been sacrificed to the Gods, the smoke of countless offerings had ascended day and night from hundreds of altars. The hungry had been fed and the thirsty had drunk to their hearts' content at the expense of the royal bounty, and gifts and honours had been lavished upon Asshad and his priests.

Nanit had returned to the palace and, with the open support of the King, had challenged a trial before the Council of Judges on the charge of sedition and attempting to raise a riot. Arioch brought up his witnesses, but all that they said simply went to show that Nanit's harangue had been wholly in favour of the authority of the King and against those who had used [illegible] arts to rob him of the fruits of his triumph. Scores of others had been brought up in his defence, the murder of the three Jewish merchants was made a very light matter now that the leader of the Hebrews was disgraced and in prison in company with all the most powerful men among the elders of the Captivity.

And so Nanit was triumphantly acquitted, and on the night that the trial ended, he sat at the King's own table clothed in a robe of honour.

Babylon seemed to have plunged into an orgie of wild and unthinking excess, and Belshazzar had sunk back again into his former slothful carelessness, thinking of nothing but self-indulgence, totally ignoring the reports which came day by day to the city of the vast hosts which Cyrus had collected after his first defeat and was leading against Babylon itself by way of the east and north.

What was this to him? Were not the walls of Babylon thick and its towers high? The country between the walls could feed the city for years, while Cyrus broke his strength against the ramparts of Nimitti-Bel and wore himself out repelling the constant attacks of the garrisons of the frontier towns in his rear.

The newly-crowned king was, in fact, infinitely more disturbed by the mysterious sickness of Miriam than he was by the peril of his [illegible]. Day by day he had feasted his eyes upon her beauty as she lay helpless and half-unconscious in the magnificent chamber which he had set apart for her use in the Palace, until his love for her had become a wild infatuation, a species of insanity which made it impossible for him even to recognise his plain duties as king, much less to perform them.

Day after day he sat for hours by the purple-draped couch of ivory and gold on which she lay, watching her with adoring eyes, and a heart aching with anxiety lest this trance-like sleep should prove to be only the fore-runner of death. Every now and then she woke to a sort of half-consciousness, took a little food and drink from the hands of the physicians [illegible] her, and then sank back again [illegible] slumber.

He had made the most lavish promises to anyone, physician or priest or wonder-worker, who could restore her to consciousness and health. Many had tried and paid the penalty of failure with their lives, and so it had gone on, day after day and week after week. The lovely form had lain there on its splendid couch, breathing gently, sleeping quietly, careless and unknowing of all that was going on about it, and day by day the longing grew in Belshazzar's heart, and the madness that was stealing over his mind dulled faculty after faculty, until those about him began to whisper that ere long the fate of Nabonidus might be his.

Even Asshad had at length joined with Nitocris in her efforts to rouse him from this fatal lethargy. The reports of the new advance of Cyrus were coming in faster and faster. Message after message, each one more urgent than the other, came in from the frontier-towns which were one by one being cut off from communication with each other and the capital, until murmurs of revolt began to be heard even in the city itself.

As soon as the lavish festivities of the coronation ceased, the natural reaction came, together with a great and sudden rise in prices. Hebrews were murdered in the streets in open daylight, and the sacking of their houses and stores of merchandise became matters of almost nightly occurrence, and still Belshazzar sat by the white form of an unconscious girl lying on the purple coverings of a Queen's couch, careful and forgetful of everything else, the king lost in the lover and the ruler in the dreamer.

He gave the scantiest attention to affairs of state. His days were passed in watching Miriam, or hunting in his paradise, and his nights in eating and drinking with his parasites and boon companions, and all the while the wave of discontent rose higher in the city, and the hosts of Cyrus drew nearer and nearer.

At length Asshad became really anxious. With him, loyalty to the king was nothing; but the maintenance of the worship of the Assyrian gods and of his own position as chief of the Assyrian hierarchy was everything, and he knew that the first moment of the entry of Cyrus into Babylon would be the last moment of the worship of Bel and Nebo and Ishtar. He saw, too, that unless some means could be found of rousing the King to take action, there must either be a revolution in Babylon, which would be the same as opening the gates to the invader, or the easy triumph of Cyrus over a leaderless people.

If this Hebrew girl could only be roused, if she could only be restored to health so that Belshazzar might take her and make her either his Queen or his slave as he thought fit, his madness might quickly be over, and all might be well even yet. And, thus thinking, Asshad at last brought himself to urge the very course which at first he would most strenuously have resisted.

So one afternoon he went to the Old Palace and found the King seated, as usual, by Miriam's couch, gazing with fixed, hungry eyes at her unconscious loveliness.

"Well, Asshad, what is it?" said Belshazzar in a slow, weary voice. "Has another city fallen, or is a new miracle-worker so sure of restoring my beloved to life that he will sharpen the stake for himself—or is the army of Cyrus outside Nimitti-Bel, or what?"

The words were spoken with a listlessness that shocked even the High Priest. Belshazzar's black and once fiery eyes were dull and lifeless. Even his young and powerful frame was beginning to look shrunk and bent, and his voice sounded weak and wavering. The Master of Life and Death in Shinar seemed, in truth, to be dying, mind and body, of the longing of an unsatisfied love.

"Lord, it is none of these," replied Asshad, "and yet in a measure it is all of them."

"No riddles, Asshad," said Belshazzar, passing his hand wearily across his forehead. "Give me plain words or hold thy peace. What is it? Hast thou thyself in all these days of waiting and nights of watching at length found a means to bring this my beloved, back to life? If thou hast, then speak. If not, go thy way and leave me, for I tell thee that until that is done there is no more life or kingship in me. With her at my side Babylon shall find me a king worthy to sit in the place of Sargon. For her I will work and think and fight and go forth and conquer Cyrus as I did before; but without her Babylon, Shinar, life itself, are worthless to me, like the day without the sun and the night without the stars. What is Babylon to me, without my soul's desire? If I cannot have that, let Cyrus come when he will. Now what is thy errand?"

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"June 8th, 1898.

entlemen,—I had a severe attack silitis, and was just on the verge phtheria. I could not walk for owing to the loss of strength. advised to take Scott's Emulsion, so, and after three bottles I found d gained my lost strength and y, and now I am pleased to say I uite well again. I was very pleased the taste of Scott's Emulsion, and it very palatable. I think your ble preparation cannot be too y recommended.—Your very truly, " (Signed) JAMES W. C. JATER."

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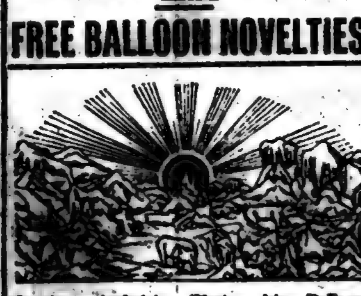

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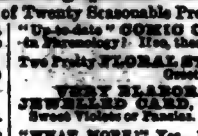

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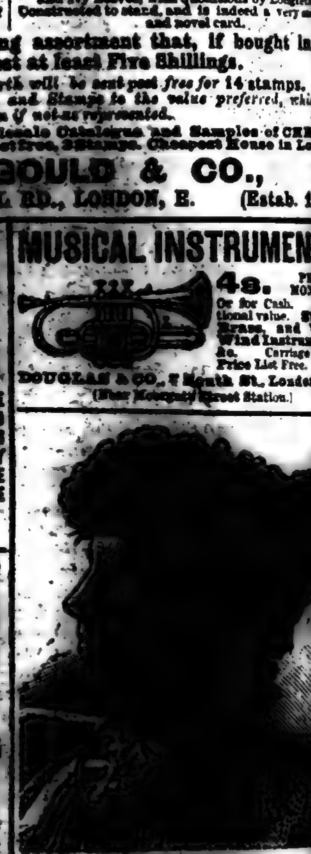

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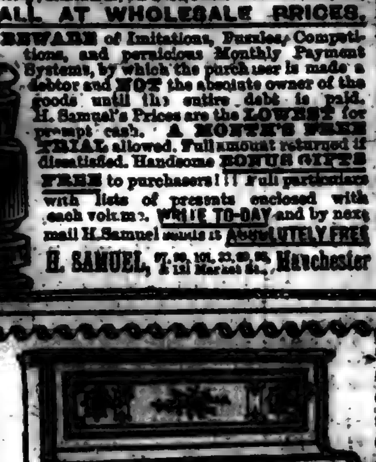

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* Asshad ... of "turning ... rising. Jer...

scatheless, without even the smell of fire upon his garments?

"Now listen," he went on, turning to Asshad and pointing with one hand to him and the other to Miriam. "In the days of Elijah the Prophet, he who was then King in Israel demanded a sign from Heaven to show which was the true God, Jehovah or Bel, and the sign was to be fire falling upon an altar of sacrifice. There were a thousand priests of Bel, and of Jehovah one. Here in Babylon thou also hast a thousand priests and I am here alone and a captive.

"Wherefore, O King, hast thou sent for me out of my dungeon? Hast thou not here Asshad, High Priest of Bel? Has he not a thousand priests under him? Have the temples of the Gods of Assyria no wonder-working images, no charms, no amulets? Thou hast shed the blood of ten thousand oxen and twenty thousand sheep and goats; thou hast poured forth thy treasures like water. Can they not even buy thee the return of this sleeping maiden's soul to her body? If they could, wherefore hast thou sent for me? If their Gods are mightier than the Lord of Hosts, why have they not granted thee thy soul's desire? Can it be that the Lord of Asshur has prayed to his Gods in vain!"

Asshad ground his teeth with rage as he recognised the skilfully-suggested dilemma in which Daniel had placed Belshazzar. It was a direct challenge to a trial of strength between the God of the Hebrews and the Thirteen Gods of Asshur or rather, as it seemed to him, between the power and cunning of the Prophet of the Hebrews and the priests of Bel.

He stepped forward, seeing that instant action was necessary, and, raising his hands outstretched towards the gilded roof of the chamber, cried:

"O King, live for ever! How much longer shall the ears of my Lord be polluted with such blasphemies as these? Is it not that the Great Gods have turned their faces away from Asshur because of the presence of these demon-worshippers in our midst? Canst thou expect that Bel will descend in the might of his majesty to undo the work of a demon and the servant of a demon? Shall the light of Shamash shine on Babylon to cast upon her streets and squares the polluting shadows of those who turn their backs on him when they pray to their demon who dwells amidst the hills of Judea?* Will Merodach take his shield and draw his sword to guard a city which harbours those who say that he is but a name and an image of stone? What are we but helpless men, worms crawling on the earth under the anger of the Gods? We have no power save from them and shall they help us when they are angry?"

There was a little silence after Asshad ceased, and then Belshazzar, looking keenly at Daniel, said:

"What hast thou to say to that, Belteshazzar? Methinks the words were cunningly spoken."

"Words are but wind and empty sound save when they lead to deeds," said Daniel, laying his hand on Miriam's forehead and casting a glance of contemptuous scorn at Asshad. Then turning to the bed, and speaking in solemn tones that seemed to ring like the notes of a bell through the silent chamber he said, "Daughter of Mishael, in the name of the Lord of Hosts, who hath stretched out over thee the strong right arm of His power for thy protection and support, I say unto thee, awake, arise and fear not, for the kings of the earth are but the servants of His will!"

Instantly Miriam's breast heaved with a deeper, almost a convulsive inspiration, which ended in a gasp. Her dark, stained eyelashes lifted slowly, her deep blue eyes, bright as they had ever been, reflected the soft evening light which glistened through the opening in the roof. They moved slowly from side to side and rested lovingly on the ragged countenance of Daniel, and she said in a lowly sweet voice that had no trace of weakness or illness in it.

"Ah, Daniel, father of our People, is it thou?—yes, surely, for no hand but thine could have called my spirit back from the land of dreams. Where am I? Did I not fall asleep in the Queen's litter? How long have I been sleeping?"

Then her eyes wandered round the room till they rested on Belshazzar, who was leaning over the couch with eyes full of wonder. She looked at him in silence for a moment or two and spoke slowly:

"This is the Palace. What is he doing here? Am I not in the Palace of the Queen? Did she not promise that no man should approach me till Belzan came back, save only the Prophet?"

Belshazzar was about to reply, but Daniel stopped him with a gesture so commanding that he obeyed it, fearing lest the hand which had recalled Miriam's spirit might send it back again into the shadows if his will was crossed. He stepped a pace back from the side of the couch and Daniel turning to Miriam replied:

"Fear not, daughter! Many things have happened and many days have passed since the sleep of the Lord fell upon thine eyes, yet at no time hath the hand of His protection been taken from thee or from those whom thou lovest, and in the end the will of the Lord of all the Earth shall be done. Wherefore, as thou hast trust in Him and in me, His servant, ask no questions, since in His own good time all things will be made plain."

"I trust thee as I trust Him, and so I obey," said Miriam, with an expression of such absolute faith and confidence that not only Belshazzar, but even Asshad himself, whose heart was hot with fury and disappointment, felt, as though by a flash of inspiration, that her returning spirit must have indeed been standing in the presence of a divinity.

"What shall I do?" she went on, putting up her hand through the cloak of her hair which lay about her shoulders.

The Prophet took it, and she rose to a sitting posture on the couch, and with her other hand brushed her hair away from her forehead and face, again looking from Daniel to Belshazzar, and from him to Asshad, and the soldiers, with eyes full of wonder but also full of life and intelligence.

"Thou wilt do that which the Lord shall put into thine heart to do, and nothing else!" replied Daniel.

* Asshad alludes here to the practice of the Hebrews of the Captivity of "turning their faces towards Jerusalem" at the hour of the sun's rising. Jerusalem lies almost due west of the site of Babylon.

Then turning to Belshazzar he continued, still holding her hand and still speaking in the same grave tone which had no trace of reverence, or even respect in it:

"Now, O King, thou hast seen and heard the proofs of what I said. The daughter of Mishael hath risen up on her couch and spoken. Her spirit has returned at the bidding of the servant of her God. Let her now have meat and drink that her strength may come back to her, and let me go back to my cell. In three hours from now she will fall asleep again, but during that time she will be as she ever was, and it shall be thine to treat her with honour or dishonour as shall seem good in thine eyes. Yet forget not that the hand of the Lord is over her, and that in His sight thou art of no more account than a jackal wandering about seeking his prey in the wilderness."

"What blasphemy is this!" cried Asshad, seeing with no little dismay that Belshazzar seemed to recoil under the weight of the Prophet's slow-spoken words. "What punishment shall be heavy enough——"

"Enough Asshad!" said Belshazzar impatiently. "Punishment is the right of kings. Who art thou that thou shouldest put words into a king's mouth? What am I before Bel, and if this God of his should truly be greater than Bel, what am I before Him? Belteshazzar has done that in a few moments which all the wise men of Babylon have not done in many days, and it is for kings to judge by deeds not words. For the present," he went on, turning to the Captain of the Guard, "let Belteshazzar be given a robe of honour for that which he has done, and taken back to his house and there guarded with all respect till the will of the King is made known concerning him. I have spoken."

"Farewell, daughter of Mishael," said Daniel. "Be of good cheer and forget not that the finger of the Lord is mightier than the power of many princes. As for thee," he went on, turning suddenly to Asshad, "as for thee and thy false gods, when the maiden falls asleep again we will see if thou canst wake her."

"That is well said," exclaimed Belshazzar, withdrawing for a moment his adoring glance from Miriam. "Go now and make ready thine enchantments, for by the beak of Nisroch thou wilt need them. Awaken the daughter of Mishael from her next slumber and cause her eyes to look with love on me, and the power of life and death shall be thine throughout Babylon for the space of three days. Fail to do this, and the next time the altars of Bel and Nebo and Merodach are red with blood it will not be with the blood of sheep and oxen. The King hath spoken! Now hence all of you. Dagan-Malak, come hither and see to it that the best of meat and drink that there is in Babylon be instantly brought in vessels of gold and set before her whom the King delighteth to honour."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TEMPTATION OF MIRIAM.

RELYING with perfect confidence upon the assurances of the Prophet, Miriam submitted without the slightest anxiety to the attention of the female slaves and tirewomen who entered the apartment at the summons of Dagan-Malak after Belshazzar had left it.

She was bathed and anointed with sweet oils and perfumes, her hair was combed and brushed and sprinkled with the dust of gold and diamonds until it shone like a halo about her. She was dressed in the finest linen and the softest silks, and chains and jewels, bracelets and necklaces, were hung round her neck and clasped on her arms and ankles; her fingers were loaded with rings set with every known gem, and finally she was crowned with a tiara of amethysts and diamonds which had once shone on the dusky locks of Amytis, the beloved of the Great King.

Then she was taken to a small but splendidly appointed circular chamber, and there, seated on a couch of ivory before a table of ebony inlaid with gold and mother-o'-pearl, she ate and drank with the appetite of youth and restored health and strength the most delicate viands, the most luscious fruits, and the brightest hued and most delicately flavoured wine that the wealth of Babylon could buy.

The food and the wine warmed her blood and raised her spirits, and dissipated the last remnants of the lassitude which her long trance-like sleep had left behind. She knew nothing of what had passed since the scene in the Gardens, save what she had guessed very imperfectly from the changed appearance of the Prophet. But she had heard Belshazzar's command to give him a robe of honour and take him back to his house, so she had no anxieties for him.

The sorrow of Belzan's death still lay heavy on her soul, but time seemed already to have begun to heal the wound in her heart. If it was the will of the God of Battles that he should fall at the head of his host in the moment of victory and glory, as many a warrior of her own people had done, who was she that she should rebel? for next to coming back in triumph to claim her as the reward of his valour, was not such a death the end that her gallant lover would have chosen?

When her repast was finished, she lay back for a little and listened to the songs of two Greek slaves to the accompaniment of harps, until she dozed off on the silken cushions of her couch, lulled by the soothing softness of the melodies and the sweet blending of the music and the voices.

Then she woke suddenly with a start, feeling the touch of burning passionate lips upon her hand, and opened her eyes to see Belshazzar, clad in the utmost splendour of his royal state and crowned with the imperial tiara, kneeling in the attitude of a humble supplicant by the side of her couch.

She raised herself and snatched her hand away with a little exclamation of alarm. As she did so Belshazzar rose to his feet, and bowing his head as a slave might have done before his Queen, he said almost humbly:

"Let not the King's beloved look upon him as though he were an enemy, for the beauty of the daughter of Mishael hath so humbled the heart of the Lord of Asshur that he counts himself but a slave in her sight!"

"Who am I that I should hear such words from the lips of the King?" she interrupted, in a tone that had more fear in it than before: "Why should he kneel before his handmaid in his own palace?"

"Because he would have her his queen, and not his handmaid!" replied Belshazzar. "Because he would woo her as a lover and not as a king. Nay, he would rather sit at her feet as her slave than take her by force as her master. Have I not kissed the hem of thy garment before thy people and mine in the court of thy father's house? Did I not pardon Belzan, who was thy lover while he lived? Did I not revoke the word of a King of Asshur, which may not be unsaid, because I knew that thou didst love him? For thy sake he went to win glory at the head of the hosts of Asshur instead of writhing out his life on the stake by the river-bank. Does he not love deeply, O Miriam, who can do this for a rival in love, when with a word he could send him to his death?"

"Is it true, Lord," said Miriam softly, as though the gently, even humbly spoken words of Belshazzar had really touched her heart. "Is it true that thou speakest as a man who hath pledged his honour, and not as a king whose word is law?"

"It is true. I swear it by the Circle and the Wings," said Belshazzar, "and that is an oath which, as thou knowest, no son of Asshur may break!"

"But this is not the Palace of the Queen," said Miriam, looking about her. "Did she not promise me that I was to dwell with her until Belzan came back? Ah, but I forgot——!"

"Yes," said Belshazzar, somewhat impatiently, for time was passing and he remembered what the Prophet had said. "Yes, thou hast forgotten. Belzan is dead. He died the death of a hero in the forefront of the battle, like a true son of Asshur. Thou shalt have time to mourn his loss; thou shalt set up a statue of gold to him, if thou wilt, in the temple of Merodach, and his deeds shall be painted on the walls of thy palace; but thou, Miriam," he went on, seating himself on the edge of her couch and taking hold of her hand again, "thou wert made for life and love and joy, not for death and mourning. Come with me now and I will show thee some little of that which shall be thine in the day when thou shalt learn to look with love upon me and say: 'Not my Lord or my King, but only Belshazzar, I am thine!'"

Without trusting herself to reply, she rose from her couch and suffered him to lead her by the hand out of the circular chamber.

(To be continued.)

Barbers on the Ocean.

ONE of the most important persons on board a well-equipped ocean liner is the hairdresser. If he is gifted with a good business instinct, he is in a position to make a good deal of money.

To the average man, shaving while at sea is a difficult and hazardous operation. He therefore calls into requisition the services of the ship's barber—a man who, by long training, is qualified to wield the razor with skill and safety, no matter how much the vessel rolls or pitches.

He is always one of the most heavily "tipped" officials on the ship. If the ship travels on a route with interesting ports of call, the ship's barber makes it his business to lay in a stock of native knick-knacks and curios of all kinds.

The inexperienced traveller is naturally a little suspicious of the native pedlars who swarm on board with their wares directly the ship is at anchor. He prefers to purchase his mementoes of foreign travel of the barber, who, having bought his stock at wholesale rates, is able to retail the various articles to passengers at prices little, if at all, higher than those charged by the native tradesman.

Needless to say, the ship's barber has also an extensive store of razors, shaving soaps, tooth powder, washing gloves, and other toilet necessaries; and if he fails to make each voyage a comfortable little sum—which may be anything from £25 to £100, according to the number of passengers and the length of the voyage—it is entirely his own fault.

"Do you know, I can't tell a lie without blushing."
"H'm! You are not blushing now."

"SMITH got off a bright thing the other day."
"What was it?"
"A lighted cigar someone had carelessly dropped into the chair he sat on."

FROM A SMALL BEGINNING.—"Leonidas," exclaimed Mrs. Meekton, suddenly interrupting herself, "do you remember how this argument started?"

"Yes, Henrietta. You said that I always insisted on arguing a point, and I said that you did, and then the conversation gradually developed."

"MY dear," said Mrs. Richleigh to her daughter the other evening, after young Woodby had departed, "how in the world did your hair become so disarranged?"

"Why, mamma," replied the quick-witted miss, "I suppose it must be from shaking my head so much when Mr. Woodby was trying to coax me to say yes."

And the mother suddenly remembered that she had once been a girl herself.

"What Husbands Can Give Their Wives as Presents." Show this article (see current HOME NOTES) to your husband.

HOME NOTES PAGE.

A Page more particularly for Ladies.

Isobel will be glad to answer, in this page, questions of general interest upon household matters, so far as space permits. Envelopes should be marked Home Notes.

To my Correspondents. Much as I wish to answer all your questions, I cannot do so if you will not favour me with your names and addresses. Many replies to queries are unsuitable for the "Home Notes Page," but could be sent direct by post.

Punch for Christmastide should be prepared as follows: Place in a suitable bowl half a pound of loaf sugar, the juice and thin rind of a lemon, and the juice of two oranges. Pour over a quart of boiling water, stir well, and then add half a pint of old rum and of a gill of good brandy. (*Reply to* Hall.)

To Freshen a Room. Place a good lump of camphor on an old plate or saucer, heat a poker, and with it burn the camphor. The fumes will thoroughly purify the room, and the smell of camphor will only last for a short time. This process is useful to get rid of the smell of damp, of a new carpet, or in illness. *Reply to* Lascet.)

A Useful Stock Syrup, for use in tarts, for sweetening fruit salads, or any purpose where sugar is dissolved in water, is made as follows: To every pound of lump sugar add a pint of cold water, bring it slowly just to boiling point, then immediately remove from the fire, or it will candy. Strain carefully through muslin, and bottle.

Leek Soup. Put into two quarts of boiling water half a dozen parboiled potatoes, four ounces of bread, two ounces of dripping, and two pounds of sliced leeks. Boil for an hour, then add four ounces of washed rice. Boil all together for another hour, then add four ounces of washed rice. This is very inexpensive and nourishing, especially if stock be substituted for the water.

Prepared Ammonia for household use is invaluable, and it should be kept in every well-regulated house. First mix one pint of alcohol with an equal quantity of good rain water, then add one pint of strong ammonia. These proportions are what I use for cleaning spots on clothing, the shiny appearance off silk, and for cleaning plate, besides various other things.

Apples as Normandy Pippins. Take some nice large apples, peel them, and remove the core with a corer. Place the apples in a jar with a cover, add a little water, lemon peel, sugar, and cinnamon to taste. Place the jar in the oven over night, and let it remain till morning, when the apples should be a deep red colour and quite tender. These may be tested by piercing with a straw. Should the apples not be a deep enough colour cook them a little longer. Serve cold.

Sausage Dumplings make an excellent dinner for a cold day. Make a paste with three-quarters of a pound of flour, four ounces of suet, salt, a teaspoonful of baking powder, and as much sour milk or water as will make all into a light dough. Divide this into eight equal parts, roll out, and lay on each a sausage; wet the edges of the paste and make it secure. Have a sauce-pan of fast boiling water on the fire, as each dumpling is ready, drop it in. Let these boil gently for an hour. Serve very hot, with good brown gravy poured round and chopped parsley scattered on the dumplings.

To Starch Lace. Use a very thin boiled starch in the liquor in which rice has been boiled. Dip the lace in the starch, and squeeze out. Place the lace between folds of a towel to partially dry it. Lay wrong side upwards on a table, slightly pick out, and over all put a piece of muslin. Rub a cool iron over several times till a little dry. Take up, and pick out the lace with the fingers so as to do justice to the pattern and the edge. Iron again. Pick out once more; carefully draw to each side upon to make the edges even and give a final ironing. The iron must always be very cool or the lace will be stiff; moving it about with the hands and draining it out all helps the good final effect. (*Reply to* Dressie.)

Home Cookery.

Edited by ISOBEL.

Ready 1st of each Month. Price 1d.

The December number contains numerous recipes for various Xmas dainties, including home-made sweets.

Sardines dipped into boiling water, skinned, boned, and pounded in a mortar, make excellent sandwiches.

White Spots on Furniture may be speedily removed by rubbing with spirits of camphor.

Try Eggs Poached in Gravy. Have some clear gravy boiling quite fast, into it slip carefully from a cup as many eggs as you wish to poach and cook till set. Serve in the gravy.

Make Shortbread of one pound of fine dry flour, six ounces of caster sugar, and half a pound of butter. Knead all together. Roll out and cut into shapes. Place on a buttered baking-tin, and bake slowly.

Renovate your Black Satin. Take equal proportions of spirits of wine and warm water, sponge the satin on the right side with this, working down the material and not across it. While still damp, iron on the wrong side. (*Reply to* M. McG.)

Almond Paste for cakes is made thus: Beat the whites of three eggs to a stiff froth, grind one pound of best almonds very fine, moisten them with rose water, mix with the eggs and add to this one pound of caster sugar. Lay the paste evenly over the cakes, and let it dry in a very slow oven. (*Reply to* M. G. W.)

Will Readers Kindly Note that on, after, and previous to this date, the Editor of Home Notes cannot hold himself responsible for any loss or inconvenience which may be incurred through their want of enterprise in not applying for the fifty sovereigns which are being given away every week (see current issue).

Though Moderate Exercise is very good for children, it is most unwise ever to let them walk too far. When the weather permits of it, children should be allowed to play in the open air, but long walks should never be enforced. When a child gets too hot walking or playing, it is a great error to remove the outer garments till he is cooler, and has been indoors some time, and then it should be done gradually. In selecting wraps for children it is always wise to carefully consider the weight of each, and, in every possible case, take the lightest.

The Herb Sauce you tasted abroad and wish to have at your own table, was probably prepared as follows. First, brown some butter in a small saucepan over the fire, add equal quantities of finely chopped onions, eschalots, parsley, chervil and sorrel. Thicken this with a tablespoonful of flour and season with cayenne pepper and salt. Stir into this about half-pint of stock, a wineglassful of cooking sherry, the juice of half a small lemon and a few drops of tarragon vinegar. If not sufficiently brown when cooked, add a little burnt sugar colouring. (*Reply to* Rekab.)

Stewed Ox-Tail and Palate is a very good dish, and suitable for a small family who are apt to find variety so difficult. Divide the tail at the joints but let the palate remain whole. To each tail and palate allow two quarts of liquor (any nice stock will do), simmer slowly till the liquor is reduced to nearly one half. By that time the palate will be sufficiently tender to peel off the prickly skin. Let the liquor cool and remove the fat. Season and colour some of the liquor, thicken it nicely with flour, and then place the tail and palate in it (the latter cut in neat pieces). Let all heat together, and have ready some slices of boiled carrot, turnip, etc., cut into fancy shapes. Arrange the meat on a dish, pour over the gravy, and garnish with mixed vegetables and a little chopped parsley.

"What a Bundle that Child Looks;"

I heard one lady remark to another last week. The object of their attention was a child of about ten years old in a loose, yoke frock, and she certainly did not look well. I divined the reason at once; her petticoats, etc., were all joined at the waist and so made her unduly stout, for she was not, at best, a slim child. Had I known her mother I should certainly have recommended her an excellent pattern (No. 2018) for a petticoat which I have by me for a child of ten to twelve, I have sketched it in the margin and you will see at once how slim the wearer looks.

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A Case of Croup in a child may often be relieved by applying to the chest a strip of folded flannel wrung out in boiling water.

Toast is less fattening than plain bread, and whole meal bread less so than white. Where there is no possibility of having toast made constantly, eat plain rusks. These can be made by any baker from a stale roll, and stored in a tin.

Christmas Rolly-Poly. Chop half a pound of suet very finely, and work it into three-quarters of a pound of pastry flour. Add a little salt, and work all into a paste, with an egg beaten up in a little milk. Roll out thinly and spread over it a layer of mincemeat. Roll up, tie securely in a pudding-cloth, and boil for three hours. Serve with a nice sweet sauce poured round.

The Scullery in every household, be it big or little, should be kept perfectly pleasant and wholesome by regular cleansing. The sink should be an object of constant attention, for if not well rinsed and sluiced after washing up, it will soon become the hot bed of disease. The vegetable matter, which is kept in the scullery, should be placed in a covered hamper, and overhauled constantly, and any root which shows signs of decay, at once thrown out. Kitchen cloths must, of course, be washed out daily and hung on the line to dry, instead of being thrown together in a dark corner or tub till a washing day is due. Meanwhile, these clothes are holding grease and harbouring smells. The shelves of a scullery should be scrubbed as often as those of the larder, and occasionally some disinfectant added to the rinsing water. Twice a week a lump of soda should be placed on the top of the sink drains, and very hot water poured directly on to it. This is to cleanse the pipe of any greasy matter adhering to it. Dishcloths, I notice, get very scant attention, and are often only rags of most doubtful nature! These should be made of soft, coarse cotton, knitted into a square of suitable size, or bought for the purpose of any draper at the cost of a penny or so. The cloth should be washed out daily with soap and soda, and dried like other cloths in the air. The scullery walls and ceiling should be limewashed at least once a year. The garbage-pail should never be stood inside the house, for then the contents are thrown in, and ugly splashes on the walls are the result. During my absence from home lately I found the wall of the scullery made very dirty and greasy for eighteen inches above where the garbage-pail had been placed by a lazy maid. This wall had to be scoured and scraped before it was clean enough to limewash again, and all disease germs banished.

Isobel

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NOW YOU KNOW.

ON the front page of this number you will find particulars of the greatest offer ever made by any publishing firm in the world. There is nothing I can say here which could be added to that already stated in the announcement. I would, however, call special attention to the offer made to readers who wish to secure these books *absolutely free.* Surely nothing could be simpler.

DOCTOR lives in a busy provincial town. The other day he was urgently required at the scene of an accident. He quickly mounted his bicycle, thinking that he would thus reach his destination sooner than if he waited for his carriage to be got ready. Unfortunately, it happened to be market day in that particular town; the traffic was very great, and the doctor's progress much impeded. Consequently, he arrived at his destination too late to be of any assistance. "In my opinion," he writes, "this was a serious affair, and I consider that when engaged in a matter of life or death a medical man should have the same privilege of right of way accorded to him as is now granted to fire-engines." ——I am quite at one with my correspondent in this matter. Such a system already exists in the streets of Augsburg, in Bavaria. The doctor's bicycle carries a red cross shield, so that the rider's profession is known to all, and much good has resulted from the custom in securing a prompt assistance in accident emergencies. There is no earthly reason why such a system should not obtain in this country.

COMPLEXION, who enjoys the privilege of wearing a red face, is anxious to know if by eating starch he can transform his "rosy apples" to "suet dumplings"—why, goodness only knows. "If so, how much starch would one require to eat daily?"——If you take one pound of starch after meals three times a day, you would probably secure the desired end—and the very end—in quite a respectable number of hours. If, however, you wish to retain your health and existence, you will leave starch alone, except what you are obliged to eat in your food or wear on your shirt-front.

REFERRING to the article on friendly societies which appeared in a recent number, J. F. L. wants to know some of the advantages of registration.——The Act compels registered societies to render periodical accounts; members of a registered society can obtain certificates of birth and death at a reduced rate; a registered society has a prior claim on the estates of deceased or bankrupt officers over all creditors; a legally-recognised society does not pay income-tax on its income, and it is also exempt from stamp duty. There are other valuable concessions which the Act allows, such as the conveyancing of property and transferring it again without cost; but while some of these privileges are of assistance to the large and public bodies, they do not so much affect the private member and smaller friendly societies. Hence the reasons of the latter for not availing themselves of the Act.

"For me, for me, it's waiting there for me,
If anybody wants a five-pound note
It's me, me, me, me, me!"

This is the way A. S. gets excited about this Note Distribution of ours. It loses its interest, however, in view of the fact that the £5 has been increased by another £20, and if my correspondent's exuberance of animal spirits increase commensurately, goodness knows what I shall be getting next. Should you at any moment between now and Monday, December 19th, feel that you are capable of improving upon this verselet, I shall be pleased to send you a gold-plated pencil-case, provided that it is the best of those submitted. Your attempt must not, though, take the place of your weekly application for the money; it must be sent separately, addressed to the "ME-ME-ME EDITOR."

G. P.—Yes, the cycling craze has packed many new phrases into this language of ours. A man who boasts is now said to "ride with a very high gear." One who is unduly haughty, has "sand in his bearings," and in cases of dispute, it is not polite for one cyclist to call another a liar. If he calls him a cyclometer, the same end is more elegantly achieved.

NO animal will face danger more readily at man's bidding than the elephant. I always understood this, and now I am convinced of its truth by the following incident, which recently occurred in India, and of which a correspondent in Bombay sends me particulars: "A small female elephant was charged by a buffalo in high grass, and her rider, in the hurry of the moment, and perhaps owing to the sudden stopping of the elephant, fired an explosive shell from his rifle, not into the buffalo, but into the elephant's shoulder. The wound was so severe, that it had not healed a year later. Yet the elephant stood firm, although it was gored by the buffalo, which was then killed by another gun. What is even more strange is, that the elephant was not 'gun-shy' afterwards."

ONE result of the article on "Gamekeepers Who Poach" has been to open the eyes of several proprietors of big preserves to the methods adopted by several of their untrustworthy keepers. I have received at least three letters already, one from Berkshire, one from Yorkshire, and the other from Surrey, from which I gather that the writers—country gentlemen, all of them—had succeeded in discovering that the practice exposed by *P.W.* had been in vogue amongst some of their gamekeepers for a long time past. On the other hand, I have been made the butt of several indignant letters from gamekeepers who protest against the apparent slur cast upon their characters. In reply, I have to say that only those with guilty consciences need feel any qualms. The article did not make an attack on all gamekeepers—the majority of whom are thoroughly trustworthy and upright men; but there are black sheep in every business.

I SHALL be glad if those subscribers to the picture post-cards who have not received all their cards up to the present, will let me know at once.

FANNY T.—Although your escort offers you the bill of fare, allow him to choose the supper to which he has invited you. You never can tell how much coin he has about him, and a rash order might break him.

INSPECTOR, who is a Post Office official, writes to point out the "danger which the average woman runs by licking the point of a pencil before she starts to write with it, more particularly when she borrows the pencil from the postman who brings a registered letter in order to sign the receipt. In view of the fact that the majority of ladies have not pencils by them of their own on such occasions, you may imagine the number of tongues which the particular pencil comes in contact with, and you may also imagine the unpleasant risks run by some of the last lickers."——I am not a microbe maniac; I never was, and I hope I never shall be. Microbes have no terror for me unless they are big enough to be seen. Far more sickness results from locking oneself in a microbe-proof safe, as it were, than by allowing the cheerful little fellows to come and play with you and go away again, without doing you any harm. I don't advocate rashness; but many precautions that are taken smack of unreasonableness. This, methinks, is one. Let ladies lick lead-pencils, and not worry about microbes.

M. T. S.—A little Swiss canton with socialistic tendencies has lately adopted a law of free burial, by which the State is the chief patron and employer of the undertakers. Two purveyors of coffins are elected in each district; all orders are sent to one during the first six months of the year, and to the other during the remaining six months. The coffins are delivered gratuitously. Notwithstanding the efforts of the government to be fair, the greatest complaint and dissatisfaction have arisen. One coffin maker has twice as many orders as his colleagues, and private families are not satisfied. So I don't think your scheme would work in this country.

ARTHUR.—Dear me, no. Never chase your own hat when it blows off in a gale of wind; just stand still, and you will see presently half-a-dozen persons in pursuit of it. When one has captured it, walk leisurely toward him, receive it with a graceful acknowledgment, and place it on your head. He will invariably act as if you had done him a favour. Try it.

ANENT the prizes offered for photos of curiosities, J. P. H. wants to know if we will return the attempts after they have been reproduced.——Certainly this will be done, provided that the name and address of the sender is written on the back, and that stamps are inclosed to cover postage. At the same time, I cannot make myself responsible for loss or damage.

MINERO is a South American correspondent, and from his home in Honda fires at me a theory regarding the cause of the danger of riding a bicycle during a thunderstorm. It is neither the steel on the bicycle nor the rider himself who attracts the lightning. The whole danger arises from the fact that the cyclist—who usually puts on a spurt to gain shelter—creates a vacuum in the atmosphere, and it is well known that lightning is attracted to such a void, even when only temporarily created. My correspondent cites instances in which cowboys riding over the prairies in that land of thunder and lightning, have been struck; and it is a recognised custom there to take it easy on horseback during a thunderstorm.

J. M., in common with many others, has an idea for the improvement of *P.W.*, and he bases his argument on a thoroughly scientific foundation. In the first place, he points out that colours, smells and sounds invariably associate themselves with the events in which they are most pronounced. For example, if you see a certain colour when a certain thing happens, every time you see that colour afterwards it would remind you of the particular occasion. Now, people do not like the colour of blood or fire, for most people have at some time in their lives got burnt or lost blood. Moreover, red is the acknowledged colour of danger, and also the colour of matches (this is J. M.'s theory, not mine), and matches, my correspondent points out, are poisonous. Consequently, I have chosen one of the worst colours for the cover of *P.W.*, and am strongly advised to change it to a light blue, a very light blue, so that every time that people see the sky, or smoke, or even glass, or slates, or anything blue or steel, or anything with the slightest tinge of blue, or a policeman in blue clothes (whom everybody respects, except thieves and rogues)—every time (says J. M.) that people see all these things, they will be reminded of *P.W.*, the only drawback being when they got a fit of the blues, which, however, have been so jocularised in comic papers that people look on the blues as a joke. Further, my correspondent advises me to print the words on the cover in chocolate colour, "which is also the colour of copper, and of many railway carriages, besides most kinds of furniture and nuts, so that if anybody looks at either or all of these things, not excepting the nimble copper in their pockets, they will think of *P.W.*"——I am sure I am obliged to J. M. for his suggestion, but most people seem pretty well content with the present cerise cover, and until they signify their desire to have an alteration of the kind, I am afraid J. M. must be disappointed.

ANXIOUS.—We find on inquiry that your friend called with his autumn poem in twenty-seven stanzas and an *envoi*, but that, owing to his ambiguous and halting explanation of his errand, he was mistaken for the gas-meter inspector and thrown into the street *viâ* the lift-shaft. Now, a poet is beyond the pale, but a gas man is far, far worse; he should have confessed his dire mission like a man, and thrown himself on our mercy.

THREE LADY READERS want to know if they are eligible for the Football Competition.——Most decidedly so. There are quite a large number of lady competitors, and some of them come remarkably near gaining the prize.

MRS. M. B. L. is an ardent admirer of HOME NOTES. She has often wondered what was the origin of the motto of that dainty little paper, namely, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."——Now I come to think of it, I don't believe I have ever told the story before. Many years ago John Brougham, Lester Wallack, Artemus Ward, and others used to meet after the play at Windhurst's, in Park Row. One night the question, "What rules the world?" arose, and various opinions were expressed. William Ross Wallace, who was present, retired from the room for a time, returning with a little poem, which was read aloud to the company, Mr. Brougham making a happy little speech of acknowledgment. The first stanza of the poem ran as follows:

They say that man is mighty,
He governs land and sea;
He wields a mighty sceptre
O'er lesser powers that be.
But a mightier power and stronger
Man from his throne has hurled,
And the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world.

GOLIATH, who considers that the English race is degenerating physically, writes to ask for an opinion on this subject.——I believe the general impression of those best qualified to judge is that, physically speaking, the race is, if anything, improving. Certainly the improved sanitary arrangements of the present day, and the general dissemination of sensible ideas with regard to the bringing up of the children should lead to this result. One is, of course, disposed to judge matters of this kind by one's own experiences. I know of a small and charming little girl who, on her third birthday—the age at which a child is supposed to be exactly half its eventual height—measured three feet three inches. This does not seem to point to any degeneration so far as the family of which this young lady is a member is concerned. On the contrary, it affords some gratification to her parents, who comfort themselves with the reflection that if all trades fail, they will be able to make an honest living by taking her round the country with a show.

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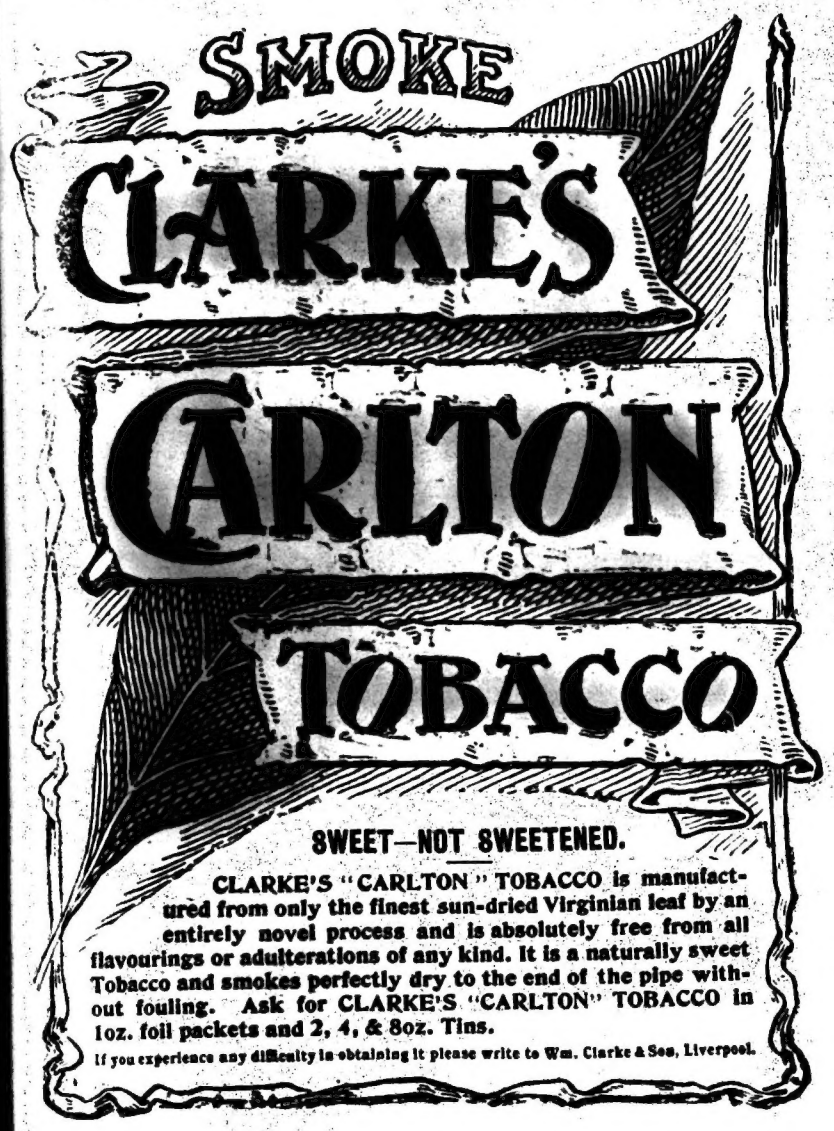

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